

DISSENT

Socialism as Problem and Ideal

Socialism and Social Classes, *André Philip* . . .
Confessions of an Old-Timer, *Henri Rabasseire* . . .
Power and the State, *Paul Ricoeur* . . . Party Machines
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Pop Culture and Kitsch Criticism

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Prosperity Without Welfare

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Jean Malaquais, Ned Polsky, Norman Mailer: HIPSTERISM

WINTER 1958

75c

DISSENT

AMONG OURSELVES

With this issue, *DISSENT* reaches the highest press run—and paid circulation—in its brief history. It has been gratifying to see that the circulation of the magazine has been steadily rising. Unfortunately, our expenses have been rising even faster: the inflationary squeeze is for us very serious. We can only urge those readers who have not yet paid their pledges from last year's fund drive, to do so at once. With those pledges paid, we should be able to get through to the end of our fifth year.

DISSENT Reprints. A number of recent *DISSENT* articles have been reprinted in foreign journals: Gabriel Kolko's "Income Revolution" in the English student socialist magazine *Universities and Left Review*; Norman Mailer's article on the hipsters in two French journals, *Demain* (abridged) and *Esprit* (complete); Frank Marquart's study of the auto workers in a new French magazine, *La Nouvelle Réforme*.

Discussion Groups. In about six or seven cities there are now discussion groups organized by *DISSENT* editors and/or readers. These groups generally meet informally and irregularly to discuss political and social topics. Readers are invited to write to our office, to inquire whether a group functions in their city or to canvass the possibility of setting one up in their city.

In the meanwhile, for those interested, we list those cities where discussion groups already exist:

(1) *New York City:* Information may be obtained by writing to *DISSENT*, 509 Fifth Avenue, New York 17, N.Y.

(2) *San Francisco & Bay Area:* Write or call Mrs. Erma Arnstein, 2111 Franklin St., San Francisco 9. Phone: Tuxedo 5-3232.

(3) *Seattle, Washington:* Please call Arlon Tussing at ALDRER 6344.

(4) *St. Louis, Mo.:* Write to David Burbank, 5501 Waterman Ave., St. Louis 12, Mo.

Volunteer Secretarial Help Wanted: If you would like to help out occasionally with clerical, secretarial, typing, etc. work (afternoons or evenings), please write to our office in New York City. We will contact you to arrange details.

Expert Translators Needed: Competent and experienced translators (French, German, Italian, Polish, etc.) are much in need; please write to our office if you are both able and willing.

Libraries: In the near future we shall be sending notes to some readers indicating that the libraries in their towns or colleges do not yet subscribe to *DISSENT*. It is very important for the magazine to widen its library circulation, and generally this can be done simply by requesting librarians to order the magazine—and also back copies!

Contributors: Please be patient if your article does not appear as soon as you would like. We have a backlog of general essays, and sometimes these get squeezed out by more topical pieces. But everything that has been accepted will sooner or later be printed.

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A QUARTERLY OF
SOCIALIST OPINION

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LETTERS

Baran's Book

Editors:

Lewis Coser's review of Paul Baran's *Political Economy of Growth* is tendentious, misleading, and sciolistic. I say this only after re-reading both Coser's review and Baran's book.

Invective may be invigorating; it is not a substitute for analysis. Just what is revealed about the argument in Baran's book by the following phrases by Coser: "crude propogandist's brief," "Stalinoid obscurantism," "claustrophobia," "the 'Fathers,'" "pious mumblings"? Clearly, Coser is angry; but about what?

Baran's thesis is not fairly summarized by Coser. The book is essentially an argument for socialist economic planning which Baran believes to be the most solid and humane basis for national economic development. He points out private economic monopoly—wherever it exists—as the basic obstacle to that development. Coser has not evaluated the book in its own terms; yet, this is a reviewer's first obligation.

As a social scientist Coser has a special responsibility while writing for a non-technical publication. And it is a difficult responsibility. He must above all be well informed on the subject matter discussed. Unfortunately, Coser is ill-informed; worse, he cultivates the opposite impression.

Coser, for example, declares: "A vast specialized literature has grown up; yet one looks in vain for any evidence that Professor Baran has ever consulted it." This declaration is fantastic. Here are only a few of the scholars in the field whose works Baran uses: Colin Clark, Schumpeter, Steindl, Kalecki, Kuznets, Mrs. Robinson, Neisser, Viner, Domar, Kaldor, Nurske, Wilbert E. Moore, Frankel, Singer, Myint. And despite Coser's allegation to the contrary, Baran cites a number of these and others in a favorable way.

As for Professors Lewis and Hoselitz. Many specialists will disagree with Coser's judgment of the first as "the foremost British expert in this area." Surely Baran's failure to cite Lewis' work re-

flects a legitimate difference of opinion with Coser. Has this become suddenly suspect? As for Hoselitz, he is himself well-enough able to judge whether Baran's failure to refer to him reflects the narrowness of Baran's research.

Coser refers to "an utterly absurd notion" of Baran's that—in Coser's words—"were it not... for the excessive consumption of the upper classes, unproductive hoardings, and the maintenance of a vast bureaucracy and military establishment, as well as withdrawals of foreign capital, the underdeveloped countries could attain high, indeed very high, rates of growth." It is nonsense, according to Coser, to apply this conception to countries like India.

Perhaps it is; after all, Baran is putting forward a theory to account for some new features of the world economy, features that were not anticipated by Karl Marx, for example. But Coser will undoubtedly be surprised to hear that Baran's "absurd notion" is reflected, more or less, in the writings of non-Stalinoid authorities such as Wadia and Merchant, the Bank of India, Gunnar Myrdal, and the United Nations Commission on Latin America. (I cite these sources not in an attempt to establish innocence by association; rather, to spur DISSENT readers to discover for themselves whether or not Baran's notion is truly absurd. Baran's book would be a good start.)

Coser asserts that "Baran shows supreme disregard" for population factors, the role of cultural factors, and several more. It should rather be said that the disregard lies with Coser; witness Baran's discussion of population factors on pages 64-66, 68, and 237-248. Natural resources, allegedly also ignored by Baran, are discussed by him on pages 186-188 and 232-234. One instance, at least, of Baran's non-ignoring of cultural factors is his discussion of entrepreneurial talent, on pages 234-237. In view of these discussions, and many others in the book, it is correct to summarize Baran's prescription as: "Just soak the rich... and things will get moving along?"

What of Baran's call for faster industrialization with its almost certain concomitant of sharpened social conflict? To

continued on page 87

A FIRST WORD ON SPUTNIK

Erxias, where is all this useless army gathering to go?—

ARCHILOCHUS

It is a bitter fact concerning our time that a scientific development so remarkable as the launching of sputnik should have evoked responses of fear and dread. Let us be candid: these were responses shared by all honest and sensitive persons, no matter how long-range an "historical" point of view they might try to cultivate. For no one considering the nature of the society that controls sputnik, or of the society that will soon launch competitors to it, can simply regard this scientific achievement as unambiguous evidence of human progress. It is all very well to say that scientific work is morally neutral and can be put to either good or bad use; but when one knows in advance the kind of use to which it is likely to be put, a response of fear and dread has an authenticity that no political analyst can afford to disregard. What new way of murder will the rulers of the world now devise?—this is the first spontaneous human response. And it is right.

Perhaps it is not enough; but it is right. And it raises once again, with a sort of chill familiarity, the inevitable reflection that the two dominant power blocs—they form the two dominant

societies as well—prove themselves incapable of coping in a humane or imaginative way with the essential problems of mankind. This is not exactly a novel thought, but we dissenters dare not allow it to wither in our minds, or to fade from our speech. Especially is this true for those of us who may be a bit discomfited when the *realpolitickers* mock us as "moralists." Why should one not want to be a moralist?

Sociologists sometimes speak of "status panic," and this—apart from the more authentic response mentioned above—best describes what happened in America after sputnik. It was as if in a ferocious arms race between two major industrial powers one could reasonably expect that every technological advantage or discovery could rest only with one side! Such expectations were a sign of an inner national sickness, an adolescent self-regard reflecting the sort of collective vanity that drives weaker nations into resentment and, no doubt, accounts for the amused spite with which some of them seem to have viewed the blow to American "prestige." The tragedy, of course, was

that a country claiming to serve the values of freedom and democracy should have allowed itself to be put in a position where its "prestige" depended on military advantage or even material power. But then what other recent development in American life could have been offered as a counter to sputnik: Little Rock perhaps?

The frenetic hysteria which seized a large section of American "opinion makers" rested on the belief that, with sputnik and the ICBM, the Russians had now gained a decisive military advantage over the United States. Perhaps; but was this an advantage that, in military terms, could be regarded as operatively significant? Surely there was good sense in George Kennan's remark that once the two dominant powers had reached the stage of possessing weapons that could destroy each other's cities, further military advances did not signally change the balance of military power—though they might affect the balance of *political* power. If one side, that is, possessed a weapon that could destroy ten square miles of Moscow while the other side had just come up with a weapon that could destroy twenty square miles of New York, the military relationship was not vitally effected.

There was reason for alarm, of course; but the main reason was political. Having conducted its struggle against Communism with only the faintest comprehension of what the enemy meant and even less comprehension of what could be done to defeat it politically, the United States had relied upon erratic displays of muscle and limited gestures or largesse. Now that the Russians had perhaps even more bulging muscles and were beginning to learn how to manip-

ulate their "foreign aid," American foreign policy, with its papier-mache "northern tiers" and its hollow "Eisenhower doctrines," seemed increasingly irrelevant. Given a situation in which war was unlikely (though not, as some people deluded themselves, forever impossible), the nature of the world conflict became increasingly political; and it was here that sputnik did matter. It was here that the United States found itself primarily challenged, since this country had itself, through a sluggish conservatism and a mindless stress upon the unique material achievements of "free enterprise," laid the basis for the blow to prestige that it suffered from sputnik.

IF ONE GLANCED at domestic American life, there was further reason for concern. At a time of the most severe crisis in Western history, the administration of this country was largely composed of men who mentally did not even live in this century: (more or less) ambulatory anachronisms innocent of complexity. With a peculiarly disingenuous blend of outmoded notions and streamlined public relations, the administration had systematically encouraged the political slumbers of the American public—had, indeed, supplied it with a heavy dose of intellectual sleeping pills—so that even if one could imagine what is so unlikely, a genuine effort by the Eisenhower administration to develop a world-wide strategy for nurturing democracy and helping the underdeveloped nations achieve significant progress, it could hardly count on adequate support from large sections of the American people. If its archetypal figure had been Charlie Wilson, it now got back from the population the kind of think-

ing that could be expected from Charlie Wilson.

More immediately, there was grave reason to be alarmed over the fate of the American educational system. That Russian totalitarianism could, by draconian measures, forced labor and special privileges to technocratic elites, develop a high level of scientific work—did this suggest that authoritarian methods might really have something to recommend them? Or that John Dewey had undermined our schools with progressive education and other “frills?” Or that it was now necessary to train vast numbers of engineers and scientists in order to meet the Russian challenge? All this had little point and much danger. The Russians needed large numbers of engineers and technicians primarily to industrialize a backward economy in a short time; sputnik was the consequence not of their vast quantities of technical personnel but of certain specific allocations of resources.

For the United States to wrench an already sick educational system toward a massive and, very likely, indiscriminate production of medium-level technicians and scientists, would not solve the immediate “problem” of shooting satellites into the air but might well do enormous damage to the social and cultural life of the country. American education had already suffered catastrophic drops in quality, and in some areas all but disintegrated into an ineffectual reformatory; this situation was both the symptom and then an ensuing cause of profoundly serious problems in our socio-economic life; and to approach or even touch it with “crash programs” would probably lead only to a further aggravation of the trouble. Shamefully neglected by the

federal government, starved by most states and localities, American education might now be the first to feel the full impact of sputnik.

II

Meanwhile, sputnik was having its effects upon political ideas.

In a variety of political circles, ranging from Senator Ellender to the remnants of fellow-travelling opinion (who found sputnik so much more interesting to contemplate than the memory of Hungary), the slogan of “competitive coexistence” was again being rewarmed. This vague and tricky phase could mean many things. It made sense to say that, since war is now inconceivable and the power of the Russian bloc had to be dealt with somehow, practical diplomatic and political arrangements were necessary. Yes; but it all depended on the arrangement. An agreement, for example, whereby both power blocs withdrew from Germany and allowed democratic elections in a unified nation, had much to recommend it; but a world-wide deal, such as Khrushchev kept suggesting, whereby the United States and Russia would arrange, in effect, to freeze the world into firmly-controlled spheres of influence might well be worse than the somewhat more fluid situation today. Much of the coexistence talk pointed not only to such a deal but to the notion of accepting politically and morally the totalitarian Russian society. Sputnik was a powerful impetus to the view that Might might just as well make Right.

Politically, sputnik helped destroy one illusion and fortify another. The claim that “free enterprise” possessed some inherent mystical superiority which enabled it always to provide

not merely a better form of society but greater material power, was beginning to seem a bit dubious these days. If you could have a Charlie Wilson in capitalist America, you could have his equivalent in Communist Russia.

In some quasi-socialist circles, however, sputnik reinforced the notion that there was some inherent mystical superiority in nationalized economy—an opinion held by people who would have been appalled to be told that the American discovery of the atom bomb proved the superiority of capitalism or the Nazi discovery of the V-2 rocket proved the superiority of fascism. All that sputnik did prove was that a centralized government with great resources at its command could, by ruthless decisions and harsh allocation policies, surge ahead in a particular phase of technology—but this did not necessarily have anything to do with whether that government was capitalist or Communist or anything else. Perhaps the last word on this topic, a kind of clarifying parody, was spoken by Franco. The Russians, he said, were the first to develop sput-

nik because “there is unity and discipline” in Russia. “This could never have been carried out in politically divided countries or in countries where there is no order . . . Russia has demonstrated to us what can be achieved when culture is directed.”

III

There remains, finally, the question—it cannot even begin to be discussed here—of the relationship between technical advance and social stagnation. Let me simply suggest an opinion. The major problem of our world is no longer—assuming for the moment that it ever was—the development of technology. Advances in technology bring no necessary good; when controlled by repressive governments they can cause pain and harm to many people; and if they seem to solve certain problems it is only by bringing into existence new and, at times, more difficult problems. The need of our times remains the ordering of a humane society, the creation of human relations among human beings. And that is why one remains a socialist.

IRVING HOWE

HARD HEARTS AND EMPTY HEADS

When the state has to exercise its monopoly on the instruments of physical violence it is symptomatic of either a breakdown or a weakening of authority. This applies to Little Rock as well as Budapest. Little Rock, of course, is not a Hungarian Revolution, and one of the ways the two differ is that the use of

force at Little Rock obscures rather than clarifies the basic issues.

After the Supreme Court decision ordering desegregation President Eisenhower was asked whether he personally approved it. His answers were never to the point; his set response was that as President he was *obliged* to enforce the decision. The clue to

his real opinion is indicated by his repeated statements that "laws cannot soften the hearts of men," e.g., Prohibition.

Eisenhower then justified sending the troops to Little Rock on the ground that unless laws are enforced "anarchy" will result. From beginning to end, then, Eisenhower has insisted that the Supreme Court's decision must be obeyed because it represented the voice of duly constituted authority. It is this continual emphasis on the necessity of preserving "respect for the law" which has twisted the entire civil rights situation out of perspective.

II

Symptomatic of the obscurity that is general are the Administration's platitudes about the "hearts of men" and the misinterpretation of the failure of Prohibition. The latter is offered as "proof" of the proposition that when laws and mores conflict the laws will be disobeyed. Therefore, runs the implicit argument, given the mores of the South immediate desegregation is impossible.

This argument, among other weaknesses, ignores the fact that prejudice pervades the entire culture. Yet New York's laws against discrimination in employment are enforced with little difficulty. The explanation is, of course, aside from the lesser amount of prejudice in the North, that there also exists a commitment to the democratic value of equality. If *some* of the mores are violated by these laws, the same laws are legitimated by *other* mores. Prohibition failed because it restricted the freedom of the individual—his sense of independence—without supplying a reasonable ra-

tionale, based on other strongly held values, for this loss of freedom.

One cannot, therefore, talk of Prohibition in the same breath with desegregation, for what is true of New York is true of the South with the emphasis reversed. Equality may not be highly valued in the South, but it does exist as a value. This means that the opponents of segregation must capitalize on the "American dilemma," that is, in some way they must support and appeal to the Southerner's commitment to democratic values. And this is precisely the element which has been absent in the rhetoric from Washington. The one person who can always capture an audience is the President of the United States. It is not often that one can specify with so much confidence what a situation demands, and it makes the "failure of leadership" so much more obvious.

Apart from this fatal defect in social insight there was also a fundamental misunderstanding of what the Supreme Court's decision was all about. It was not aimed at changing the "hearts of men" but *changing their behavior*. The aim of the Court was not the elimination of prejudice; its purpose was to make certain kinds of *behavior* which violate the norm of equality illegal. Desegregation does not depend solely on a prior change in basic attitudes; it can at least partly occur without such a change if social forces are present which make it difficult for prejudice to be overtly expressed.* When a struggle breaks

* In the case of Louisville, for example, these other forces are: 1) the lesser intensity of prejudice in a border state; 2) the consequently greater relative strength of the norm of equality; 3) industrialism, which necessitates the acceptance of peace-

out over the issue of prejudice, the outcome, as in Clinton, Tennessee, depends upon which of them is most heavily reenforced. *The success of Kasper and Faubus in reenforcing "their side" highlights the immoral inertia of the Administration.*

Given this fundamental lack of understanding, Eisenhower had no alternative to taking his position on "duty" and the necessity of preserving social order. At this point the limitations of a schoolboy view of society and a bureaucratic military career become apparent. For it is no accident that Eisenhower bestirred himself only *after* the outbreak of violence at Little Rock. Clearly, any President, unless he were ready to accept a dissolution of the union, would have had to do something at that point.

But where the problem of prejudice merely annoyed or confused him, the action of Governor Faubus was something he could understand and abhor to the very depths of his being. Any competent military officer could see that "the men were getting out of hand." Discipline—obedience to duly constituted authority—was in danger. Hence, the arrival of the troops to ensure "respect for the law."

But what does respect for the law depend on? In a democratic society law exercises authority over men when it is accepted as an expression of that

society's fundamental values. Power is legitimated only when there is a demonstrable relationship between what it requires and what men believe ought to be. But at no time did the Administration define the Court's decision as demanding obedience *because it was an expression of democratic values*. Instead, Eisenhower demanded obedience because the decision was the voice of *authority*. When respect for the law and the necessity of social order is made the sole ground for obedience, then the strongest claim power has to legitimacy in a democratic society is lost.

It is now apparent that we should have expected nothing else from this Administration. Any Administration which is so strongly dedicated to the preservation of the *status quo* is not likely to support forces making for social change. And this, after all, is the long range significance of the desegregation decision. It creates the conditions for, though it by no means insures, change in the social structure.

III

From the perspective of the Administration, Little Rock is a lesson in the virtues of obedience and the sins of disobedience. However, this kind of perspective distracts attention from the real issue at Little Rock. Trite as it may sound, that issue is simply maintaining and extending democracy and equality.

Little Rock is an example not of the sins of disobedience but of how far we still have to go to ensure the minimum conditions for any worthwhile life.

MURRAY HAUSKNECHT

ful interaction between antagonistic groups ("tolerance"); 4) an urban culture which leads toward the same end; and last, but not least, 5) good old, ordinarily economic self-interest. On the other hand, the Negro will enjoy *full* equality in all areas of life when the sentiment of racial prejudice decreases significantly.

PROSPERITY WITHOUT WELFARE

The economic upswing of the past ten to twelve years has come to an end. Full employment, prevalent for most of this period, is now in jeopardy. Though enjoined by law to maintain full employment, the government has deliberately abetted deflationary policies, despite many indications of a serious downturn. It has been guided essentially by financial considerations, and its policies have strengthened purely financial interests. These policies are bound to undermine the substantial gains which a period of full employment brings to the people.

To be sure, unemployment is not likely to reach the magnitude of the thirties. Defense outlays, now scheduled to rise more rapidly again, will prevent that. But this means of solving the question of joblessness highlights the problem of what full employment means in the "welfare state": persistent and pervasive insecurity as budget funds are cut or shifted without regard to employment effects; and an increasingly irrational and wasteful allocation of the fruits of productivity.

THE FIRST PHASE of the worldwide economic upswing of the past decade came from the reconstruction and pent-up consumer needs arising from World War II. The second phase, though beginning in early 1950, was associated with the Korean war. In a sense, however, the Korean war hampered and postponed the large-scale post-World War II replacement and modernization of capital equipment,

both inside and outside the U.S. The third phase, the "boom," began late in 1954. It was composed of two major elements:

1) There was a remarkable spurt in consumer demand for cars, housing and the durable consumer goods related to it. This boom was largely due to a population phenomenon: couples married after World War II had children at the same time as older couples who had married before or during the war, but had postponed parenthood for obvious reasons. The full effect of this phenomenon was delayed into the mid-fifties. It will not recur.

2) The consumer goods boom was followed by an extraordinary increase in business spending for plant and equipment. This must be regarded in part a consequence of the preceding consumer demand boom. At the end of 1956, however, there was already a gap of 6 per cent between the average preferred and the actual operating rate of manufacturing firms, a gap which has since probably widened to about 12 per cent.

No combination of factors is now in sight which would sustain the upswing of the past decade. Large-scale investments in underdeveloped countries could be such a factor, but the political conditions necessary for such investment scarcely exist. Thus, only greater intervention than ever by the government in the economy can assure a high level of investment and, hence, employment.

THOUGH IT IS TRUE that the expansionary economic forces of the past

three years were not "war-induced" (at least not to the extent that one might say this of the earlier phases of the upswing), it is also true that government expenditures were probably *the* dynamic force underlying the latest boom. The ratio of government spending on goods and services to total national product has been close to 20 per cent since 1953. This compares with about 9 per cent in 1929, the last year of a boom arising solely from autonomous forces in the economy.

Such forces still exist, of course; but in the absence of government support of major economic sectors, they cannot assert themselves. The ratio of public to private construction, for example, which was 26 per cent in 1929 (at a time when private building had already slid down from its cyclical peak), was close to 40 per cent in the boom years of 1955 and 1956. Housing—and its allied durable goods—cannot thrive without active government underwriting or purchasing of mortgages, or both. Headway in the atomic industries is proving impossible without substantial government investments. Because of sharply declining levels of business spending on new equipment, the trend toward automation, which through its labor-saving effects has a momentum of its own during times of full employment, must also wait on the multiplier effects of government spending.

The massive role of government—and it should be understood that the extent of this role is enhanced by, but is not merely the result of, defense outlays—is indispensable for keeping the rate of new investment at a growing pace, so that the economy will not contract. By providing a ready and

insatiable market for, say, construction and defense materials, or for agricultural commodities, the state indirectly creates vast investment opportunities. Thus far this policy has secured a stable basis for full employment, but now there begin to appear signs of increasing difficulty in absorbing new additions to the labor force.*

Thus the role of government in the American economy has not diminished in boom times, but has been further increased. The mere maintenance of investment at a steady rate is insufficient to keep the economy growing and employment full. Inasmuch as not merely the amount but also the rate of investment must continue to expand if joblessness is to be avoided, government spending must not be abated and must actually be continually raised. The forces of free enterprise no longer operate, or can be allowed to operate, automatically.

WE MUST BRIEFLY CONSIDER in terms of resource allocation certain consequences of this outpouring of public funds into private hands which use them solely according to criteria of profit, and not by standards of what is socially desirable. While the evil of large-scale unemployment has been excised from the body of capitalist society, it is as if this same evil persisted in a different guise: It now takes the form of increasingly unproductive use of resources, both human and material. There is, for example, the great proliferation of such "services" as financial and real estate agen-

* Sources on this and other points made in this article are omitted for reasons of space; they will be furnished by the writer upon request.

cies, advertising and other "communications," sales organizations and law factories. The ratio of income generated in these "services" to total national income has not materially increased since either 1929 or 1948; but the rise in employment in them has been altogether out of proportion to that in the goods-producing industries. Jobs in the latter increased by 11 per cent between 1929 and 1956; jobs in the former by 74 per cent. We are not saying that services are unessential or that no rise in "service" employment relative to goods-producing should take place. What is important is how the fruits of the great productivity of the goods-producing industries are to be used. The growing disproportion in employment between the two sectors occurs in the face of obvious and unsatisfied needs for goods, as well as serious deficiencies in employment in such genuinely productive services as education, medicine and the arts.

Employment in government has risen 134 per cent since 1929, due mainly to the expanding defense establishment. Defense itself has eaten up every year since 1952 a sum whose staggering dimensions exceed by over 3 times the outside capital needed by *all* the underdeveloped countries of the world in order to raise their national income by 2 per cent annually. The "welfare state" has lifted the capitalist economy to unprecedented levels of prosperity, but it has done this on a strictly national basis, and at the expense of a truly international economy; and it is thereby squandering the skills and wealth which are, properly, a heritage of all mankind.

THE OPPOSITION of business spokesmen

to more government spending, and the "economy measures" attempted by the Eisenhower Administration, have deflationary (employment reducing) aims. Their spokesmen's proclaimed concern with tax savings implies a preference for shifting, rather than a reduction of, the tax burden. Their denunciation of the growing economic weight of government is ideologically motivated; but it is worth noting that as soon as cuts in government spending start hurting, "principle" quickly gives way to "realism." Nonetheless, there is ample evidence that Big Business favors mildly deflationary policies. Why?

Full employment has put a virtual floor under all wages. The labor force has been perennially tight, in addition to being organized by strong unions which set the pattern for wages and benefits. Partly because of this, there have been great gains in productivity (output per man-hour), although, contrary to popular misconceptions, real wages have generally lagged behind these gains. Nonetheless, labor costs (which are a function of productivity and money wages) have increased considerably since 1948.

This advance in labor costs could to a large extent have been absorbed by business through a reduction of profits. Higher wages and benefits to labor set a doubly salutary welfare pattern when they are won at the expense of profits, rather than passed on through higher prices. For to be thus absorbed means a diminution of that portion of profits going to the unproductive recipients of dividends. And dividends as a percentage of total profits have been, on balance, rising from about 36 per cent in 1948 to 56 per cent in 1956, while retained

profits (which are reinvested) have correspondingly fallen.

Business, however, has resisted any inroads into profits; it has instead raised prices in a successful effort to hold on to its share of the national product. (This is not to imply that *individual* businesses have any choice about their profit rates.) To be sure, advancing labor costs have been but one element inducing price rises. Another, perhaps more important one, has been increasing non-labor costs incident to doing business, costs associated with the, in large part, parasitical growth of the "services" discussed above. In any case, raising prices has become ever more difficult as the boom matured and excess capacity became the rule in nearly all industries.

Now, this has resulted in a severe profit squeeze. The ratio of profits to sales in 1955 was 7 per cent below that in 1948. It declined another 7 per cent in 1956 to a figure actually below that of the recession year 1949. (The *mass* of profits has increased around 80 per cent since 1947. This is roughly the same advance recorded by employee compensation. Both reflect the expansion of the economy, not higher per-unit profits, and not so much higher per-employee incomes.) This deterioration of profit margins below even previous recession years cannot simply be balanced by greater sales volume, since the market is not broad enough and does not grow fast enough.

There being a limit to the market, as well as to the extent to which growing labor and other costs can be offset by gains in productivity, profit margins can now be preserved and enlarged only by establishing a more

"flexible" wage structure. But this cannot be done in conditions of full employment. Hence the growing resistance of business to increases in government spending through which full employment is maintained.

THIS RESISTANCE, however, cannot be successful unless it is somehow coordinated with the government's fiscal and monetary policies.

Such coordination has progressed measurably. It is first of all evident in the emergence of financial interests and authorities as quasi-official arbiters of economic wellbeing. The Federal Reserve has been permitted to become a major force in making economic policy; it is arrogating to itself the power of determining the proper pace and direction of expansion of the economy. Public debt financing policies—to which an economy where government spending plays the central role is especially sensitive—have consistently strengthened financial interests. Restrictive monetary policies have redistributed funds to big business, damaging and often destroying smaller businesses. Interest rates have been allowed to rise to unconscionable levels in the capital-richest country on earth. At the same time, the credit base has been deliberately narrowed, and this has given added control over the economy to the central bank. Deflationary policies have been masked behind allegedly anti-inflationary measures, whose effect on prices, however, has nowhere been in evidence.

These policies are bound to have serious regressive effects on income distribution. They also make for a shaky employment situation. A major gain of full employment is some de-

gree of job and income security. A measure of the extent to which people rely on the permanence of these gains is the threefold increase in consumer indebtedness since 1949 (disposable income has risen in this period by only 60 per cent). There can be no quarrel with this rise in consumer debt—it is a means of achieving some of the benefits full employment yields to people. But it also aggravates their insecurity when deflationary policies combine with a downturn to imperil the only source of their livelihood—their jobs.

IT IS, TO BE SURE, unlikely that the present recession will be allowed to take on serious proportions (though after the cumulative forces of a downturn have reached too great a momentum, the power of government spending may well be inadequate to bring

a quick reversal). Full employment has created too many vested non-labor interests, the government with all its multifarious agencies and hangers-on is too deeply entrenched in economic life, and too much prestige is at stake internationally. Moreover, the economy is already so closely geared to defense, that any increase in defense outlays will act as a powerful multiplier. But even without much of a downturn, full employment in the U.S. has proved to be quite compatible with an increasing gap between income strata, with bitter labor strife, and much deep insecurity. And this will be the more so, the more economic power comes to be concentrated in the state's hands, and the more business and the state tend to identify with one another.

November 1957

H. BRAND

Poverty and Plenty

The nation's press paid little or no attention when the U.S. Census Bureau recently released a statistical survey showing how wide is the gulf between the "haves" and the "havenots" in prosperous America. The Census figures show, for example, that 900,000 families, 2% of the nation, had incomes of \$15,000 or more while another 6% had incomes between \$10,000 and \$15,000. In contrast, however, seven million families, or 20% of the total, received incomes of less than \$2,000. Of these nearly 3,000,000 families reported incomes under \$1,000.

The hypothetical or "median" family had an income of \$4,783 during the year, an increase of 8% over 1955—but an increase that was all but wiped out by higher living costs. Altogether 42.7% of the nation's families had incomes, before taxes, of less than \$4,000 a year—a pretty sorry statistic for the richest nation on earth.

Farmers, incidentally, have been the hardest hit in the nation's economy. On Sept. 9 *Time* magazine said: "The U.S. farmer is a rich man." But *Time* must have had in mind the operators of great factory-farm establishments, for the U.S. Census reported on the same day that the median farm income for 1956 was \$2,371.

The Progressive, November, 1957

POP CULTURE AND KITSCH CRITICISM

Harold Rosenberg

Mass Culture,* compiled by Bernard Rosenberg and David Manning White, is the first book that has ever tempted me to apply the reviewer's cliché, "definitive." The theoretical, historical, statistical, cultural, anthropological, depth-analytical, polemical, prophetic articles in it on TV, the movies, pulp fiction, advertising art, etc., more than exhaust their subject. I should like to believe that it will now be considered closed for some time to come. "*On peut finir avec la sculpture*," Giacometti once said to me. If it is possible to be done with an art—and this is an age when artists keep trying to finish theirs off—it ought likewise to be possible to make an end to talk about comic books and science fables.

I confess that one of the reasons I hope that the wares of the cultural supermarket will now be left for their proper customers is that I find something annoying about the mental cast of those who keep handling the goods while denying any appetite for them. True, some of my best friends are mass-culture analysts. Naturally, I am not referring to any of them. Most have taken only one or two shots at the matter, and I know none who has not had better things to say on some other topic. The people I am complaining about are the mass-art specialists, particularly the profound ones, those who can't switch to Channel 4 or roll over with a paperback without beholding hidden patterns of the soul and society of contemporary man.

As if there weren't already too much talent and intellect in America steadily draining into the *dreck* of the mass media! Must the mite of the PhD and the literary critic be tossed in too? With so much *bought* interest in bad art, there would hardly seem any need for volunteers. Particularly, when one considers the shrinking quantity of thought being devoted to anything worth while.

The argument that the mass-culture intellectuals come not to bathe in the waters but to register the degree of its pollution does not impress me. I believe they have chosen to play in this stuff because they like it, including those who dislike what they like. I never heard of anyone who tore himself away from Walden Pond or his cork-lined isolation cell to fulfill a duty to study best sellers or Tin Pan Alley.

Besides, whatever their aim, and often it's not so easy to figure out, the chief effect of writings like those of Leites, Riesman, Rolo and

* Free Press. 561 pp. \$6.50.

others in *Mass Culture* is to add to kitsch an intellectual dimension.

Every discovery of "significance" in Li'l Abner or Mickey Spillane helps to destroy the distinction between kitsch and art. One of the grotesqueries of American life is the amount of effort that goes into displaying the wisdom secreted in bad movies and in proving that modern art is meaningless. But it is nothing else than the intellectualization of kitsch, in which the universities, foundations, museums play their part, that makes popular media into such a tremendous social force against the individual in this country, as in the Soviet Union. If only popular culture were left to the populace!

Certain social scientists have a great deal to answer for in this. They have put into practice the notion that a bad work cleverly interpreted according to some obscure Method is more rewarding to the mind than a masterpiece wrapped in silence. And since the interpretation is everything, why pin it to a novel or poem when more people are likely to have seen *The Prince and the Showgirl*? Cultural Anthropology pays better than New Criticism.

Will anyone deny that to these people their own insights are superior to those of art, or that their attitude toward the artist is a blend of philistinism, condescension and malice?

Social Science apart, will anyone deny also that in recent years mass culture analysts in the literary world have been ceaselessly distracting to themselves and to the junk they deal with the attention that ought to go to writing, painting, music? Yet some of these recruiting Sergeants to kitsch proclaim as the chief issue the need of the individual to "hold his own against the spreading ooze of Mass Culture."

I CAN'T IMAGINE a more representative assembly of thought on this greedy theme than Rosenberg and White's book. But one aspect of mass culture is kitsch criticism of kitsch. This, too, deserves to be studied; it might be more important than kitsch itself, since it relates to the morale and capacity of the intellectuals who are not yet in the service of mass manipulation. Yet very little has been written on kitsch criticism, probably not enough to constitute a section of *Mass Culture*.

Some modes of kitsch criticism of kitsch:

criticism of kitsch that ducks the question of the quality of the object it is examining—"the swampy ground of esthetic dispute," as one expert puts it;

criticism of kitsch that ignores the fact that, given the social and psychic conditions under which popular art is produced, a coherent expression of any kind is all but impossible in it;

criticism of kitsch that has the air of emanating from an art lover put upon by inescapable kitsch.

"The counterconcept to popular culture is art," says Leo Lowenthal. Anyone who expresses hostility to kitsch appears automatically to

be a lover of the arts. Thus by his exposures of absurdity in *Time-Life*, movies, ads, Dwight Macdonald becomes a bloodbrother of De Tocqueville, Nietzsche, Ortega. Qualified counterconceptually, he expresses his views on contemporary painting or poetic diction for *The New Yorker*.

It turns out, unhappily, that the counterconcept is unreal. While Macdonald's taste for kitsch is largely negative, it is genuine; at least genuine enough to yield him the time to become familiar with it. Modern art, however, revolts him, tempting him to get to know it about as much as would the gases in a condemned mine.

In practice, the counterconcept to kitsch is more kitsch. When Macdonald speaks against kitsch he seems to be speaking from the point of view of art; when he speaks about art it is plain his ideas are kitsch.

What is true about Macdonald is true about most of the contributors to *Mass Culture*. Popular art is their meat, whether as a clue to current relations, as an object of moral protest, as an occasion for self-expression, or just for the grinder. No doubt they believe that the true substance of their existence is poetry, paintings, concertos. Such self-delusion can be enormously stultifying. The discussion of popular art in America is thrown out of shape by the vacuum of positive interest in art. As against the symbol searchers, on the one hand, and the wailing women of culture, on the other, I'd take a TV actress any day.

There is only one way to quarantine kitsch: by being too busy with art. One so occupied gains the protection of *the principle of indifference*—exemplified in *Mass Culture* by Edmund Wilson's testimony, one of the few by literary personalities: "Who Cares Who Killed Roger Ackroyd?"; it states simply that detective stories stink, that those who read them enthusiastically are probably in no better condition, and that he, Wilson, will debate no further on their qualities.

ORTEGA is consistent. He not only dislikes mass art, he dislikes the masses themselves. They gave him a sense of being crowded. Personally, I dislike Ortega more than I do crowds. Had he not been disputing with them possession of the most prominent places, he could have found plenty of room.

It is a trap for the critic of popular culture that, an esthete by implication, he will also begin to consider himself an aristocrat. There is no surer way of making oneself ridiculous. Several *Mass Culture* authors sound as aggrieved as Ortega by the Industrial Revolution. One might as well walk on Fifth Avenue leading two greyhounds.

"The counterconcept to popular culture is art." The statement is false. There is no way of setting up art as the opposite of kitsch. Whatever can be said of the "distortion of reality" by popular art can be said in equal measure about art. Nor does art aspire to a higher moral plane—kitsch is much more prone to exclude personal malice, for example, the source of so many superb passages in poetry, music, painting.

Art has no official attitude toward "poetic crap" (Rimbaud). When kitsch first began to spread in European cities, excellent poets found it cute. By now there is too much of it around for it to be a mode of the intellectually exotic. As a snobbery, the craziness of ad images and copy is as passé as going to Harlem or reading thrillers. Nevertheless, genuine artists like Stuart Davis or Bill de Kooning continue to make good use of billboards or lips that sell rouge.

KITSCH is the daily art of our time, as the vase or the hymn was for earlier generations. For the sensibility, it has that arbitrariness and importance which works take on when they are no longer noticeable elements of the environment. In America kitsch is Nature. The Rocky Mountains have resembled it for a century.

There is no counterconcept to kitsch. Its antagonist is not an idea but reality. To do away with kitsch it is necessary to change the landscape, as it was necessary to change the landscape of Sardinia in order to get rid of the malarial mosquito.

To affect the landscape is the only legitimate reason for investigating the processes of popular art. In other words, politics is the only legitimate reason. To study kitsch as propaganda is legitimate—e.g., the Berelson-Salter piece in *Mass Culture* on the treatment of minorities—since the aim of this is not knowledge alone but action, to dissolve the "old crap" by means of a new reality.

LIFE AND KITSCH have become inseparable. Genuine art in our time has made this point again and again—in Cubist collages, the phylacterics of Neo-Plasticism, in Surrealist poetry. Using kitsch is one of art's juiciest devices, and a comic revenge for the looting of art by kitsch. Art drinks the corn of the popular, takes it in limited doses as a poison, as a vaccine. It deals with life in the same way.

Art also attempts to hurl itself out of both life and popular art, to enter its own realm, that of creation liberated from things.

But art never makes the mistake of regarding itself as a counter-concept.

Academicians insist on a separation and an opposition, on the counterconcept of an idealistic art. The result is, of course, kitsch. But every fabricator of kitsch looks down on other people's kitsch.

That kitsch and life are grown together into one monstrous limb may very well be at the bottom of the new delusion that the secrets of existence can now be read on the movie screen.

MASS ART is a phenomenon of the world of art and can be understood only in relation to conditions in that world. Mass art is the product of talent put into the service of

- a) art that has established rules;
- b) art that has a predictable audience, predictable effects, predictable rewards

Kitsch is art that follows established rules at a time when all rules in art are being constantly put into question by each artist. As a result kitsch is manageable at a time when art comes into being only through tragedy, irony or a cast of the dice.

Kitsch is art that has an audience at a time when art speaks to a blank wall and reaches the public only after it has bounced off and exploded into a rubble of critical platitudes.

Kitsch is thus art produced in obedience to the basic assumptions of the Art Of The Ages: the assumption that traditional forms can be put to new uses through technical means; the assumption that these forms retain an intrinsic power to move people. Both these assumptions are correct.

With regard to the norms of art there is nothing wrong with kitsch, whether represented by Leonard Bernstein or the draughtsman of Little Orphan Annie. It is art that has all the difficulties.

People don't need works of art any more for entertainment—there are too many commodities more directly designed for that purpose. As Cummings said thirty years ago, poetry competes with elephants and motor cars. Thus art loses itself if it becomes an extension of daily life, it becomes a commodity among commodities, kitsch.

But if art distinguishes itself from the automobile ride or reading the newspaper, if it arouses a unique psychic tension, it becomes disturbing, a risk. Labelled FOR CERTAIN MOMENTS ONLY, it dissociates itself not only from the millions who regardless of their "level of culture" have never passed through comparable experiences but from normal life in general, including that of the artist himself. It is a fact that artists today cannot put up with art for long periods and turn to kitsch for relaxation.

Art is not the sport of starving hermits. Art implies an audience, if only as a source of easy money and applause.

Yet the best art of our time restricts its appeal to other artists, a group that has neither money nor social glamor to bestow and whose members are for the most part bitter and miserly in handclapping.

Or it appeals to introverted adolescents, to people in crises of metamorphosis—a small-town girl who has met an intellectual, a bachelor forced to give up drinking, a business man who feels spiritually falsified—all these being more attentive to themselves than to the work.

In any case, there is no audience for art and no luxury for artists. Both go to kitsch, which earns them by believing and consenting to the fact, that art and human nature remain the same throughout the ages:

KITSCH is right about art, but art aims at changing the landscape, art norms or no art norms, audience or no audience.

Art succeeds, but the situation of art is hopeless. For half a century it has been forced to surrender one position after another. Poetry yields to kitsch its traditional forms, retreats to free verse, abandons that too

when copywriters begin to chant in the new style about refrigerators. If the spirit of poetry had no other resource than the poem it would long ago have signed a lifetime contract with *Omnibus*.

There are probably less than 100 persons in the USA today fully supporting themselves through the production of works of literature, painting, music—probably far less than 100. Yet who can count the number of those who are living well off the literature and arts industry?

Kitsch has captured all the arts in the USA. The art world is full of kitsch, literary magazines brim over therewith. When painter X or playwright Y begins to turn out X's and Y's for his readied audience—kitsch. One of the best American poets has produced little else for years—in 30 seconds I could name five painters in the same state. In each case, no question of dishonesty, of "selling out," but of muscular slackness resulting from the discovery of an audience passively responsive to certain norms.

Art will continue its maneuverings of retreat between beauty and anti-art, between reality and esthetic counterfeit, revolution and nostalgia. More and more the condition of art turns into its own affair, resistant to the generalizations of those who would fit it into their system of functions. In the present organization of society only kitsch can have a social reason for being.

ENVOI

The force of a constantly growing pyramid of cartons
stuffed with the good things of the world transforms
itself into the anxious eloquence of a million sales-
men with their train of preachers, rhapsodists,
limners, crooners and clowns.

In the phantasies generated by this material fetich the
background is endless refurnished—mining towns or
hospitals, the underworld, the Near East
—to provide decor for the recurrence of
a single adventure: the breeding of new customers.

Inspired by physical objects, the American Circus is more
seductive than the fables generated by the hollowed-
out Idea that rules the regions of Communism. It is
also more humane: its celebration of brutality is
restricted to nightmares of comfortable consumption
—business or sex racketeering, political sadism
by pre—or past—market types, such as
Southerners, militarists, Red—
and, unlike the popular spectacles of other civiliza-
tions, is singularly devoid of metaphysical justification.

The injuries inflicted by American mass art affect mainly
the psyche and its possibilities. Also, by a law of
retribution, its deadliest mutations are
visited upon those who produce it and collect its tolls.

Socialism as Problem and Ideal

The articles grouped together in the following section were all written independently of each other. We have brought them together, not to create facile juxtapositions or to enforce any particular stress within socialist opinion, but simply because they seem to us to contribute opinion and information that our readers may find helpful in rethinking political problems. None of them pretends to provide a full-scale socialist theory or "complete" answers to the questions that are asked; this very modesty, it may be suggested, constitutes a virtue. Anyone reading these articles will no doubt sharply disagree with some of them. That is quite as it should be, and exactly the way the editors feel too. All that matters is that the idea of socialism, rescued from the deadlines of ritual incantation, should be regarded as a significant problem and a living ideal.

*Some of the articles by foreign contributors have been condensed to eliminate local or topical references. We are grateful for permission to reprint in the following instances: to the French journal *Esprit* for Paul Ricoeur's article; André Philip's publisher (see below); to the Italian journal *Tempo Presente* for Silone's article.*

SOCIALISM AND SOCIAL CLASSES

André Philip

Our concern is not to undertake a theoretical analysis of socialism in the abstract but rather to understand what socialism should be for us, at this time, in our Western civilization. Hence I raise the question: Is socialism primarily the expression of clearly defined interests of a specific social class? Or is it the manifestation of a desire for justice and liberty, assuming different forms throughout history but seeking through this diversity of forms a constant moral ideal?

Socialism and Social Classes

I should like to review the fundamental ideas of Marx, which may be condensed in the following statements:

[This article appears as a chapter in *Le Socialisme Trahi*; translated and published here by permission of Librairie Plon and the author.—EDITORS]

- 1) History is motored by the class struggle.
- 2) Class structure is dependent on the organization of the ownership of the means of production.
- 3) Political power is essentially a reflection of productive power.
- 4) The working class continuously increases its numbers, little by little absorbing the old middle classes as these are destroyed by technological progress.
- 5) Furthermore, the pauperization of the masses and social inequality are continuously increasing, so that the struggle between the capitalist class and the proletariat becomes increasingly bitter and leads inevitably to revolution.

According to this theory, the achievement of socialism seems to be a development which, without appealing to justice, results simply from the inexorable laws of history. The workers will move toward socialism because they can't help doing so; in defending their immediate interests, they will gradually become aware of the necessity for the revolution. This will be achieved by their vanguard, who, during a transitional period, will set up a "dictatorship of the proletariat."

These Marxist formulations, I would contend, no longer conform to the realities of advanced industrial societies. The fact is that we must take account of a growing process of social differentiation which characterizes our society and of its inevitable psychological and political consequences.

Social differentiation is manifested in three ways: *the survival of the precapitalist classes; the breakup of the management class; and the division of the working class into a complex of autonomous groups.*

Perseverance of Pre-Capitalist Classes

1) *The old precapitalist classes continue to exist* and do not seem at this moment to be on the road to dissolution.

a. In the first place there are the farmers, small land-owning peasants. Whatever the economic difficulties resulting from the meagerness of their holdings, the peasants cling to the soil, and no one has been able to demonstrate that there is anywhere a natural tendency toward concentration of rural properties. In countries like Russia where such concentration has been violently imposed by the state, the policy has been a failure and has resulted in a sharp decline in agricultural production. At the present time some Eastern European countries, following the example of Yugoslavia, are allowing a return of the small landed peasant. On the other hand, in the Western countries the agricultural system is slowly being organized into an increasing number of cooperatives. The independent farmer, then, seems destined to survive in our society.

In traditionalist regions, such as western France, the tenant farmers, even though not proprietors, are often conservative. They continue to

be deeply influenced by Catholicism; they respect the old landowners, who still live in the country, and maintain toward them a kind of benevolent paternalism.

On the other hand, the small landowning farmer in France is most likely to vote left. Having received his land from the French Revolution, he remains faithful to its spirit; often he even turns to Communism, to the extent that, as the owner of a few acres with a meager yield, he sees his road blocked. The tenant, on the other hand, having at his disposal a medium-sized piece of land which is often superior to the small landholder's, can always hope to rent additional acreage and thus move up the social ladder.

With certain peasants, the more revolutionary they are in their speech, the more conservative and anachronistic they are in their methods of farming. Just as in the early stages of the industrial revolution displaced artisans destroyed machinery, so certain medium farmers, hard put to adapt to new technological methods, take an extreme leftist position at the same time that, by opposing technological progress, they are actually defending the status quo.

But at this moment the orientation of the younger French farmers, who seek technological innovation, is toward an organized economy based on cooperatives. These modern farmers are aware that to market their products, they require both an enlarged European market and a large and prosperous working class. And there is a strong tendency toward an alliance between such rural elements and the various groups of organized labor. This is what has happened in the Scandinavian countries, where the peasants are members at once of the Socialist party and of their own autonomous agrarian party which works closely with the Socialists.

b. The situation is somewhat different among certain elements, mainly craftsmen and tradesmen, who represent precapitalist enterprises outmoded by modern technology. In a large number of industries, traditional craftsmen are thus threatened. The same is true for some of the small tradesmen. Rather than modernize their technology, the small and medium-sized businessmen prefer to reduce production, take a higher markup on a small output, and maintain their living standard either by protecting themselves against competition through tariffs, or price-fixing agreements, or by cheating on taxes.

It is in this kind of enterprise that labor relations are usually worst. Here we can observe an example of Marxist principle, but often expressed in a way that Marx himself could not possibly have foreseen. Technological progress brings about competition which gradually eliminates outmoded economic forms; but instead of becoming sympathetic to the worker, the small businessman rapidly becomes his main adversary. Indeed, the more he finds himself driven toward the proletariat, the more desperately does the man of this old middle class resist proletarianization; he aligns himself against the state, which levies taxes, against

large-scale finance, which oppresses him, against the banks, whose interest rates he considers too high, and above all against the workers and office holders whose security of employment he envies. Desperately seeking a psychological compensation for his position of inferiority, he is the clear prey of fascist-like movements.

The Break-Up of the Management Class

Now we come to two new elements:

a. First, there is the new independent middle class, in manufacturing and trade, which represents, not modes of production threatened by industrial progress, but new modes of production which are tied to the expansion of large industry.

There is an imperceptible crossing over from the precapitalist to the new middle class, especially if the old craftsmen and tradesmen, instead of clinging to their outmoded techniques, group together in cooperative organizations so as to use contemporary techniques while at the same time preserving the individual's independence.

In France this class of small and medium-sized businessmen is becoming more important. For as certain industries come to be nationalized, the role and influence of the smaller enterprises in what remains of the private sector have become more significant. It may even be suggested that automation will tend toward the same end. The more the key industries are mechanized and the more the manual work they require is reduced, the larger a proportion of the population will turn to related trades, commercial ventures, and service industries.

The members of this new middle class often come from the working class, and they remain—at least verbally—attached to the working class. Thus the French Socialist party includes a large number of tradesmen, artisans, entrepreneurs, and small businessmen who started life as workers in large industries. These people welcome technological progress, but they have no confidence in state intervention; they accept nationalization of key industries, which doesn't touch them personally, but are violently opposed to planning, price fixing, social security, and fiscal manipulation. Their ideal is to work hard, earn a lot, and remain independent.

Often this new employee class will make common cause with the old middle class and with the liberal professions, especially in protecting its tax exemptions. Thus there has grown up in France the myth of the middle classes, a myth which seeks to establish between the independents and top salaried people a group solidarity whereby, actually, the interests of the salaried persons are often sacrificed to those of the small capitalists. Further, the small entrepreneurs can barely see further than their own businesses or think about general problems. It is in this group that we find the strongest resistance to pan-European ideas, to grasping an awareness of the inevitable evolution of the old colonies. Whether or not they retain membership in a left-wing party, these

elements are actually oriented toward an obsolete policy of economic liberalism, and it can even happen that in a time of economic difficulties they will become pawns of a potential dictator.

b. On another side, in big businesses, control is gradually being divorced from ownership. With the expansion of corporations and the increasing number of stockholders, the directors of large enterprises have taken on an increasing independence. Actually the role of the stockholder is more and more blurred, and in performing their jobs the directors have to convince, not so much the stockholders on whom they are theoretically dependent, as the engineers and workers with whom their daily work is conducted.

The social origin of this group has also changed. More and more the directors come to their position not through inheritance but through education and professional training. These are men devoted above all to productivity; the profit of the enterprise remains the *sign* of their success, but their *aim* is production *per se*, the efficient performance of a task.

Recognizing the necessity of economic organization, the managers represent the most progressive element in *economic* life, and it is among them that we find today the majority of the innovators of pan-European institutions. The danger is, however, that, arrogant in the knowledge of their value and convinced of the need for a profound economic transformation, they will try to work *for* the people, but not *with* them, and will thus contribute to the formation of a technocratic regime which will require a strong discipline, a powerful executive, and a government with authoritarian leanings.

The Progressive Differentiation of the Working Class

a. Modern industry needs a certain number of skilled workers, who, depending on the country and the industry, represent a quarter to a third of all wage earners.

First, there are the old craftsmen in the preindustrial sense of the term. In machine-tool shops, for example, such workers construct new machines or new devices for old machines in accordance with engineers' designs.

Here we see a professional aristocracy which, having been reduced in numbers and influence by the industrial advances of the nineteenth century, is today being reconsolidated. Indeed, with the progress of automation, we can foresee the day when work which today is semi-automatic will become totally mechanized; then skilled workers will again become the core of a working class whose function will be to oversee, adapt, and repair automatically operating machines.

Though in France these skilled workers do not at the present time command a very high wage, they continue to enjoy a prestige which other workers do not. The skilled worker is often proud of his professional qualifications. He has an inner wish to take the initiative, to master

the machine rather than be mastered. He is interested in his work and management must respect his independence. Often there is less difference between a skilled worker of this kind and a technical manager than between a skilled worker and one who merely performs a routine specialized operation.

It is this intermediary status that helps explain the skilled worker's ambivalent attitude. He is one of an elite which in the past was in the vanguard of social and political battles. Today it is again he whom we find in all countries at the top of trade-union organizations. But at the same time he is becoming more and more conservative in defense of his own interests against the unskilled workers. In the colonies especially he easily becomes a petty bourgeois who defends his privileges against the native laboring masses.

Here then is a worker who is alert, organized, and responsible but has at the same time a tendency to establish himself in the existing system to the extent that this system is really receptive to his initiative and offers him a chance to rise on the social scale.

b. But the majority of workers are still semi-skilled or unskilled laborers who are actually the product of the nineteenth-century industrial revolution.

To the extent that he works on a piece-rate basis, the semi-skilled worker has improved his living standard considerably. But his road is blocked; he sees no way to advance within the plant hierarchy. At the same time he is completely without security, for with any fluctuation in production he may be laid off. And as for his work itself, it is almost without interest. The factory is simply the place where, without making any sense out of it, he passively carries out tasks and orders so that he can make a living.

This situation can lead the specialized worker to one of two attitudes:

I. He may have an escape fantasy whereby he invests in a political myth his hopes and profound desire for change. But he carries over into his political life his factory-learned reflexes, his habit of not thinking, of merely submitting to orders. His class consciousness is simply a directed resentment; it is not a considered expression of working-class life but an evasion of the reality to which he must submit. The man who at the factory fears the boss, will away from work fear the party. These are the workers who, with a docile violence, rally to Communism or fascism, according to the times. In fact they are not able to believe in democracy while in their everyday lives they experience a reality which is the exact opposite of democracy.

II. But often such a worker commits his dream of escape to some non-political sphere. This is so especially when he has been betrayed politically and has lost the hope of a complete change in his working conditions. So he devotes himself to the highest possible output in

order to raise his standard of living and thus ape the petty bourgeois life which he sees all about him.

While the skilled worker strives to provide himself with a comfortable home and a little garden, the unskilled makes do with a motorbike, movies, football, dancing, and betting. Observations made recently both in Austria and in Great Britain demonstrate a growing trend toward the disintegration of this part of the working class and toward the development of attitudes which are a-collective, if not a-social. The individual is beginning to emerge from the masses; but disoriented and disillusioned, he craves little more than the most mediocre pleasures. In short, we find here a dispensable, dissociated man who has not yet succeeded in making new social ties. This man is likely to be neither a responsible trade unionist nor a political militant; he leaves activism to others, himself only following and allowing himself from one moment to the next to be seduced by the extreme right or the extreme left.

c. But one group that is becoming more and more important is that of the white-collar workers and office holders, that is, the salaried middle class, which now includes more than a third of all workers and which seems to be constantly increasing. At the bottom levels, the living standard of this group is generally no higher than that of the working class. But members of this group are distinguished from workers strictly defined by the fact that they manipulate not machines but human relations and that, in addition, they participate in the power of the managers.

An office worker's budget is about the same as a worker's, but its composition is more nearly like that found in the higher social classes. This worker in effect continually skirts the edges of the bourgeois world; he prepares the materials for executive decisions and puts them into effect.

Because of the diversity of its elements, it is hard to define the character of this group. Frequently a good deal of its work is monotonous and uninteresting, comparable in this to the work of unskilled workers. (Perhaps here the progress of automation will lead to concentrating responsible judgment in a minority and pushing the majority into the position of the worker who executes one simple operation and submits to an increasing insecurity in his job.) The psychological attitude of this group is analogous to that of the barely skilled worker: disgust with work that is devoid of interest, passivity, malaise, and self-expression by escape fantasies. One small step up the salary scale, however, and a strong similarity with the middle class can be found: a wish to move closer to the executive layer, which is at once admired and envied, a longing for independence, and a resistance to proletarianization, here with a rightist orientation. But once we go up the social ladder another step and reach the more satisfied white-collar worker, we find a group that is more likely to be attracted by democratic socialism.

IN OUR ANALYSIS of a series of sociological groups we find that each has peculiar characteristics while at the same time embodying contradictory elements. Still, two phenomena characterize our epoch: *mobility* between groups and the progressive *institutionalization* of the conflicts bred among them.

1) Clearly there is an intergroup mobility which will go on increasing with industrial advances.

This evolution is far less advanced in the European countries than in the United States, for in Europe the educational system still operates as a social barrier, setting classes against one another. Despite the accomplishments that have been made in assuring free primary education, the lower social strata are kept in an inferior position because they have not had sufficient opportunity for intellectual development. Class differences also continue to be expressed in external signs. Only a minority of the people own cars; most workers have to be satisfied with bicycles; living quarters impose a serious barrier between classes. Nevertheless, at the present time class mobility appears to be increasing, even sometimes disquietingly so: the elite worker who succeeds in getting a higher salary and acquiring professional competence usually tries, not to move up to the top factory jobs, but to leave the factory and become a craftsman, tradesman, or a miniature industrialist.

2) Social conflicts are officially recognized and institutionalized. The existence of trade unions, which organize not only specialized workers but also professionals, white-collar workers and civil servants, has given these diverse groups the possibility of expressing themselves freely. The general acceptance of collective bargaining tends to regulate conflicts in accordance with commonly agreed-upon rules.

The Consequences

The analysis of different social groups that we have just offered seems to suggest two consequences, one related to *power* and the other to *massification*.

1) Despite the diverse factors that we have observed, there still remains no less a social conflict than ever, still remains the fundamental problem of the structure of society. But I wish to make several observations at this point.

a. Group antagonisms today are much less closely related to wealth than to income. Certain families belong to the dominant classes without being proprietors at all and without having any property except house furnishings or a place in the country. More and more, higher incomes are being spent in the pursuit of a higher living standard. These phenomena are related to the evolution of saving in the last several years. Taxes and the spread of social security have reduced incentives for individual saving. The economic development of the country

has more and more come to depend on the two factors of public, tax-financed investment and self-financing, whereby business enterprises instead of declaring dividends to stockholders plow back enough profits to assure their expansion. In these circumstances *property is playing a declining role in class differences*, which come to be better defined by *income differentials* and especially by *varying modes of spending income*.

These modes are related to consumption, particularly conspicuous consumption which arouses the antagonism of the majority of the population and feeds social conflict.

b. Income differences are themselves related to power differences. The fundamental social problem has today become *the distribution of power among social groups*. The example of the USSR, especially, demonstrates how in a regime where all property has been attached by the state, social groups are gradually re-established along the lines of differences in public functions and incomes attached to particular jobs. In the West industrial power is distinguished from political power: the man who wields industrial power doesn't necessarily wield political power, even if he has great influence; and the man who has political power does not succeed in our time in fully expressing it in the economic and social spheres.

Here again we are confronted with very complex phenomena which allow of diverse and often contradictory kinds of conflicts.

c. The problem of power pertains not only to relations *among* groups but also to internal relations *within* each group. In every group, association, or political party, the overt or implicit interest of the leader is toward maintaining existing structures, whereas the interest of the mass of followers is toward changing them.

There is a struggle between the minority, which holds power, and the majority, which allows itself to be directed. In a group which commands but little power, this may be entirely in the hands of a minority of leaders. The same individual who, in certain spheres of his activity, is ground down may have a great authority in his own particular group; he thus acquires a domineering mentality; and we find certain common characteristics, a certain mutual understanding among the leaders of the various antagonistic groups, who learn to respect and understand one another, somewhat as the officers of opposing armies feel toward one another a quasi-professional solidarity.

d. This complex distribution of power creates extreme variations in psychological attitudes, and changing trends in these attitudes follow regional traditions and environmental conditions. One might say, very roughly, that a tendency toward violent extremism, fascism or Communism, is to be found among all those whose relations to their work is a passive one: unskilled workers, white-collar workers, old middle class, backward peasantry. But the same is not true of workers who are interested in their work and who have a chance to rise socially; they

adapt quite easily to the petty bourgeois state of mind. Among the elite workers, office holders, middle-level office workers, and higher management personnel, there is a trend toward socialism; but in the case of the last named it is a technocratic, aristocratic socialism which could as well turn toward Communism or fascism.

On the whole it seems that the *same man*—qualified worker, tradesman, or lower civil servant—*can have different psychological attitudes in different circumstances*; it is not possible to generalize on the subject without undertaking, in every country, a profound sociological study which would investigate each group at once in its work circumstances, its social environment, and its historical traditions. What is symptomatic at present is that when a man of the left is sent to the colonies and has command of a group of human beings, he easily becomes a racist, an imperialist, and a nationalist. In the same way that on the national plane, patriotism is found in its most aggravated form at the frontiers, it is at the frontiers of the social plane that patriotism is also most aggravated, and on the edges of social groups are to be found the most virulent conflicts and the greatest bitterness. And since group frontiers shift from one country or region or period to another, it is hardly possible to predict what will be the attitude of this or that group.

2) The result of these complications is that in the world of today we no longer find the simple class differentiation that Marx observed, but rather a host of groups, each with its private interests and each in opposition to its neighboring group. In the Marxist system, the division into two classes whose antagonism would increase to the ultimate point of revolution made it possible to offer to one of these classes, the workers, a total vision of the world and a myth of social transformation which renewed their hopes and aroused them to revolt. Today we no longer have a generalized conception of the oneness of civilization capable of orienting and inspiring men. There are only battling groups, each defending its private, often variable, interests, with no common standard that would allow us to judge them and order them by relative importance.

From this situation evolve two consequences:

a. In today's world the group arrayed against other groups becomes its own goal, its own unique measure of reality, rejecting even the idea of intelligence or rationality, rejecting, in other words, any will to coordinate and synthesize values. More often than not, the ethics of the group are inferior to the ethics of the individual.

The individual, if he so wishes, can see the consequences of his actions. The group is hardly aware of the long-term effects of its actions, especially the effect of its passivity. A great deal of discussion has centered on the question of whether the majority of the people in Hitler Germany knew what went on in the concentration camps. It seems that they really were unaware, just as at this moment the majority

of Frenchmen still don't know what is going on in Algeria. Further, we are all of us far too little aware of the fact that right now 60 per cent of the human beings in the underdeveloped countries are starving, and that the gap between the condition of these people and our own, far from closing, widens from year to year. While the individual's relations are with those near to him and he can thus be made responsible for the direct consequences of his actions, intergroup relations are with those who are distant, so that the consequences of actions cannot be known, except by a minority of leaders.

Further, the egoism of the group is more difficult to overcome. A group is always hard to unify and it can more easily be unified against than for something. The individual is able to transfer to other groups his powers of hate and vengeance. Insofar as the group is a large one, each individual can embody in it his pride, his wish to see himself at the center of the world; the exaltation of his own self, the proclaiming of himself to be sole possessor of all intelligence and all virtue, to which he can't decently give way purely as an individual, he can easily find in his party, his class, his nation. In passing off his interests and his passions as the expression of universal values, man finds a way to polish his pride. Now, social groups play a more and more important role in the world of today. They are inevitable, as a consequence of technological progress; they are useful, as a means for the social reintegration of isolated, desperate individuals. But at the same time they are demigods in conflict, demigods whose relations are based on a more or less hidden violence.

b. The consequence of this multiplicity of hostile groups, each expressing its own private collective interests, is the phenomenon of "massification" which characterizes our time. The term "mass" was originally used to designate a crowd gathered momentarily. Today we know that physical closeness is not a necessary attribute of a mass. A mass is not a special social layer; it is the result of the behavior of the individual in the middle when he has been depersonalized, deprived of his relation to society and of the inspiration of a common ideal. The mass has little chance to exist in a structured society whose individual members are integrated in clearly defined social classes, each of which has its own way of life, its own characteristic scale of values. But the mass appears as soon as society begins to dissolve, as soon as differentiated classes begin to break up into a host of small groups which represent diverging interests and none of which is general enough or structured enough to sustain a value system.

Finally, the mass is related to the disappearance of the general notion of a social community, a notion that can offer a goal which might unify men. Such masses allow no differentiation. They have no movement of their own; they are composed of receptive individuals subjected to external pressures. Every man becomes a part of a mass to the extent that his attitude is a passive one.

He is subjected to the impulses of fashion, to the propaganda of press and radio, and it is not by chance that this massification has been particularly realized in the United States. Propaganda, then, allows the individual in the mass to beguile himself, to supplant a conscious choice of attitudes with external pressures in the form of effective excitation. The mass man, be he conformist or in revolt, awaits the savior from without.

c. In conclusion it very much appears that the world of today does not correspond at all to the analysis Marx made in the mid-nineteenth century and that working-class unity is at this moment no more than a romantic illusion. Instead of two polarized classes we find a multitude of groups which have divergent interests and have thus lost a consensus of social value. An ideology capable of defining socialism cannot emerge automatically from any of these groups. Undoubtedly an economic interpretation of history can demonstrate the *conditions* for the realization of a political ideal, the obstacles that stand in the way of its achievement, and the lines of force that might favor it. But analysis of a social situation cannot, by itself, lead to the elaboration of a doctrine, or even to the definition of a principle of action. *A fact cannot be turned into a value.* It is not in defense of this or that interest group that a man can be termed political. Socialism is not the automatic expression of the interests of one group, whatever the group; *it is a political choice in the name of a universal moral ideal which must be found elsewhere than in analysis of the social fact.*

Translated by MIRIAM WASSERMAN

CONFESSIONS OF AN OLD-TIMER

I. Aphorisms on Socialism

Henri Rabasseire

Ideas change but their formulas remain. Two people a thousand years apart may be of the same mind though they strove for different things; on the other hand, no bore is more boring than the disciple who quotes what I said twenty years ago. Yet I love him—not for the doctrine he continues to profess but because once in our lives we hated and loved the same things, sang the same hymns and were clubbed by the same police. By the same token, I would have loved the man who said, 2,500 years ago: “Good government is one of which the people know it exists; not quite as good is one which they praise”; or the man who said: “The meek shall inherit the earth.” I suppose I would have recognized their voices before I appreciated their ideas. So with other saintly fools or with my old fellow militants. Marching together made us into a movement. The idea was a flag, and some sacrificed themselves for the flag—I always thought they were dying for me, not for the flag. Solidarity was from each to all for each other—not from all to the flag.

Sometimes we were wrong—maybe more often than we know or care to admit; perhaps we are wrong even now. Yet, were we given a chance to live our lives over again, we probably would make the same mistakes, fight the same enemies, hold the same illusions holy—or similar ones which also are based on the same assumption: that Man is good.

We were wrong most of the time when we tried to realize doctrines or when we followed a course of action that seemed to follow from the scriptures. We were never wrong when we acted in solidarity with people who tried to shape their own destinies. How could we be wrong so long as we asserted our faith in Man? Even defeat could not disprove us; it only made our faith stronger. “Man is good” is a proposition which is neither true nor untrue; it can be validated by men who believe in it militantly, or invalidated by faint-heartedness.

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OUR REAL DEFEATS were not the occasions when we were beaten; they came when we were told we had succeeded. Our ideas, let's

face it, had a tremendous success; everybody “stole” them and “realized” them. The Nazis took May Day, the very name of socialism, and the pageantry of revolution. The Bolsheviks appropriated the doctrine of a planned economy. The Republicans have adopted the progressive income tax and the Democrats the welfare state. Nasser—and tomorrow maybe King Saud—nationalizes big industry.* Socialism has been hyphenated with nationalism, its mortal enemy, with anti-clerical radicalism and with clerical Christianity. It has been perverted into a totalitarian State philosophy and into the ideology of conservative labor parties. No sage cowardice that has not been justified by “socialist” consciences and no bold crime that has not been committed in the name of socialist efficiency.

The common denominator of all these betrayals is easy to define. They stole every part of the system, every single aim and every doctrine; they claimed to have realized every socialist demand. But they never stole the basic assumption that Man is God. Some will go so far as to admit that man is perfectible, and they will proceed to educate him accordingly, by their own or even by our lights; but they will never let him educate himself. They will do everything for the people and eventually provide them with the most perfect socialist economy; but they will not allow these people to act in their own behalf, make their own mistakes and assert their own solidarity.

Socialism has become a doubtful name, not because it has been betrayed so often by its leaders, not because it has been diverted so often into strange channels, but because it has been institutionalized, taken over and managed. They are *using* socialism! Dare we protest? Dare we say that we never thought of Progress in terms of abstract achievements: so much planning, so much welfare, so much nationalization? Dare we return to the original meaning of socialism—*socii*, the fellows—as that which people have in common?

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MANY TRAITS of “socialism” simply appeared when certain trends of modern industrialism were extrapolated. A socialist they call a man who admits that free enterprise no longer can handle all these jobs: atomic energy must be kept under safety rules by the Government; communications must be supervised by the State; great hydraulic works must be undertaken by national planning boards; weak industries such as farming must be subsidized. Worse—an efficient defense industry, a crash rocket program can be planned by despotism better than by free agents; the interests of nationalism point toward a “socialized” economy, with more integration, more interventionism, more welfare and planning, more compulsory arbitration. A moderately progressive kind of welfare economy has been “creeping” rather far and fast

* Since I wrote this, the King’s oil policy adviser, an ARAMCO official, has published his plan to nationalize the pipelines.

lately, and the more intelligent business executives know—or even admit—that it is here to stay. Outside Congressional and Fourth-of-July oratory, classical free enterprise is deadlier than a doornail, and socialists who continue to fight against its ghosts are museum pieces themselves.

It is about time for socialists to admit the facts: there is more “socialism” in the world today than capitalism or any other system. Though we don’t like the kind of socialism that is being realized, we cannot repudiate it. Governments in most new countries now are in complete command of the national resources, either through ownership of the most important enterprises or by virtue of various control devices. Feudalistic and capitalistic forms of ownership are successfully checked by political means; the various under-developed economies are being developed according to plans which may satisfy the desires of their élites but above all flatter their national ambitions. Even in the advanced countries, older capitalistic traditions yield to “mixed economies” which are largely regulated; production goals and distributive aims are formulated through pluralistic methods of pressure groups and political in-fighting. Staunch defenders of free enterprise now acknowledge that these elements of “socialist” economic thinking have become part of their system. Vice versa, orthodox disciples of the “economic” view of history now admit that wage, price and related disputes have become “political.”

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SOME SOCIALISTS—the true ones, I think—do not agree that socialism is an extrapolation of present trends in the capitalist economy. The term, socialism, should be saved from confusion with state capitalism or even state collectivist systems, such as the Yugoslavian and Chinese may be tendentially. Indeed, it should not be identified with any, even the most perfect system; for originally socialism was a movement of protest against all systems. Its history in modern times begins with the Jacqueries and Luther’s indictment of the “Companies Monopolia”; it includes a sequence of anarchist, apocalyptic and chiliastic rebellions against the domination and exploitation of man by man, against industrialism and the modern State, against commercialism and militarism. At times, these movements could merge in common hate of an overriding symbol—capitalism provided the common denominator for all exploitation and domination. At all times, however, anti-capitalism had these two components: resistance against domination by an upper class, and resistance against an “inexorable law” which prescribed that exploitation of human factors is the way of economic progress.

This democratic and humanistic root of socialism has come to flower in conceptions such as “industrial democracy,” “workers’ control,” in the “council” movements which sprang up in Poland and Hungary recently, in the American shop steward and even in the German “co-determination” law. In a still more perverted form, it shows up when

workers repudiate socialist parties who (however ineffectively) try to defend their living standards, and follow the Communists who ask them to assert their freedom to protest. A minority of French Communists favor dictatorship and like Bolshevik terror; most of them think they are defending democracy. In their propaganda speeches the Russians aptly refer to the "ruling circles" of the West; this target, which evokes memories of the "Elders of Zion" and other world conspiracies of the upper class, rallies pseudo-democratic and pseudo-socialistic instincts of anti-capitalistic defense most effectively.

It was the merit of Marx to focus the opposition against the specific "system" of capitalism and the "economic laws." He also attacked the social class which benefits from this system and is interested in its preservation; but for him, this was only one aspect of a two-faced phenomenon. The more capitalism develops, the less is the parasitic beneficiary—the private owner of capital—the villain of the piece. But his gradual disappearance or submission under the abstract law of profitability merely confirms what should have been clear to readers of *Capital* from the beginning: that class situations are not properly described by the symbols rich and poor, but by economic function, and that authority is derived not from property but from the right to use it. The managers of big corporations here are not exploiting people; they merely translate the equation of rational efficiency into "personnel relations." Likewise, the managers of Soviet state trusts administer the law of growth of industrial enterprises. Socialism is a human reaction against both forms of command by law over man. Though not hostile to industrialism, it is not its fulfillment. Any society may use technological achievements without surrendering its own values. The Japanese militarists knew how to use industrialism; the Russian Bolsheviks abandoned themselves to its spirit. In the democracies the fight is still raging: will modern industry breed the perfect robot or liberate man from drudgery and servitude? These alternatives require some reflection on the question of what socialism is today.

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WE ARE LEARNING better to know our enemy. Marx still wrote against "Das Capital"; today we are tempted to indict "Das Social." Marx still could write confidently that at the end of the capitalistic development nothing might be left to do but to "expropriate the few owners of already socialized factories." Today we are frightened at the sight of the "already socialized minds"; after expropriating the owners of the communications networks their function still would be "socialized"—maybe without minds.

So many socialists now are fighting the spread of the so-called mass culture. All this is not new since Huxley's "Brave New World"; but today it is a problem for socialists. Huxley still believed that he was satirizing the trend of capitalism (he says specifically that the entire weird arrangement had been engineered for the sole purpose of assur-

ing maximum consumption of surplus production), and he still implied that socialism would break this fatal trend. In the meantime, the collectivist haven has developed traits which are worse than the capitalist hell. Capitalism brought oppression from outside, but left the inner man largely intact; so much so that he was able to rebel. Collectivism captures the man totally; consent is being “engineered” or given “freely.” People are “reasonable” because they no longer see alternative choices. Capitalism crippled people’s sensibilities, to be sure, but collectivism demands their withering away.

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TO BE SURE, most socialists are horrified by the picture of socialism that has been unfolded in the last forty years, and they will insist that this is not what they had fought for. Certainly, they are right. But the liberals and democrats could have protested against the realization of liberal and democratic ideals a hundred years ago. They had to take the responsibility because at least one thing could not be denied: liberalism was run largely by liberals. Socialism, on the contrary, is being run by everybody but socialists. Sometimes it can hardly be distinguished from its worst enemies—state capitalism, fascism, and nationalism.

We may vainly protest that the most important characteristics of socialism are missing in all these mixed, adulterated and perverted conceptions; that a socialist system run by non-socialists simply is unthinkable and that socialism is an integrated whole from which no single feature can be omitted or integrated into another system. All this is beside the point, or rather, this is just the point: that the enemy has infiltrated the fortress and the socialists are not in command of their own house. It just is not possible to ignore the language of the common man and to insist that the name of socialism should be reserved to an esoteric notion of an esoteric sect. This is even less possible if the missing element in all these pseudo-socialist systems is ill-defined.* Socialists themselves are not agreed on its nature, nor did they warn others of the impending confusion. Moreover, the definition of strict or pure socialism, too, seems to be hyphenated. The moment I say “democratic socialism” I admit that there are other kinds, at least potentially, and that, to satisfy me, I have to add to the definition of socialism a foreign ingredient taken from another source. This attempt at evading the issue, therefore, defeats the claim that socialism is an organic whole.

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CAN SOCIALISM be an organic whole? There really should be but one such whole—man himself. No institution, not the most perfect

* The editors have suggested that I distinguish the two kinds of socialism, for instance, by putting the mock socialism in quotation marks. This piece, however, is too serious and too bitter for me to permit of reading aids for those who do not take the trouble to listen.

one, can or should be an end. Whoever thinks that "socialism" or any other system is the end of history, stops thinking as a socialist.

A sad truth I shall confide to you. You want socialism perfect because you are not socialists. You substitute a system for the fullness of your humanity. You perfect institutions instead of making them fitter for people. Beware lest you end up fitting people to institutions. There can never be peace between man and his works. But it is true that there never was less peace between them than now.

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OUR SOCIETY cripples people and inflicts on them the disease of unpersonality: a man is appreciated not for what he is but for what he contributes usefully; he is cleft midway into a public and a private being. The first is his usefulness to others and it includes every one of the qualities which make him replaceable; the other is hidden away though it contains the unique qualities of his humanity. Our society deprives itself of that part which is the essential part of the personality.

In industrial-commercial relations, togetherness is neither freely granted out of the fullness of sympathy and generosity, nor is it ever allowed to bring out essential human impulses. It is a means to achieve productivity. Man himself is a means, not only for other men but of the production goals. Wherever we see people together, their togetherness is either perverted or it turns its back on society. Society, which does not need love, assigned it a sphere of prescribed and permissible behavior, just as the Church, unable to cope with the totality of man, found a niche for pardonable sin. In this process society immunizes itself against feeling; it prevents the most human needs from affecting social relations. The totality of man never is present in society; the best of him is kept private.

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CAPITALISM does not impede creativity; it misdirects it by capturing its specific virtue. I doubt that capitalism has slowed progress anywhere. An occasional patent which some monopolists failed to exploit properly is offset many times by the number of patents that would never have seen the light but for the interest of some monopolist in its sale. On the whole capitalism has promoted progress. But it has done something to the inventor. He no longer considers himself an artist. He no longer creates out of the fullness of his life in his community. The complaint that capitalism stifles creativity is ridiculous; we hear nothing but exaltations of so-called creativity. What the critics mean is something else: productivity has been insulated and even has become an end in itself. This system also has permitted the advances of Soviet science. The price—science has been taken out of political and philosophical context.

Creative of what? There should not even be a word "creative" apart from any specific creation.

Lately, another flow of noble feelings has been isolated from its wellspring of human generosity and perverted into useful techniques of management. Business now is for social welfare, for planning, for greater equality and, *horribile dictu*, for "solidarity," "togetherness" and "group thinking." After taking over most of the institutions and the material aims, the enemy is availing himself of a mock-version of the socialist spirit. To make the perversion complete, some socialist thinkers now have been moved to join the chorus of protests against "mass culture." When this clarion was first sounded, by Le Bon and Ortega y Gasset, it was the war whoop of declared anti-socialists, and, with the exception of Hendrik de Man, no socialist at the time protested against these aspects of the new socialism.

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THIS PICTURE of the situation might be objected to on the following grounds: the present mass culture is characteristic of a capitalistic economy which still is being run by capitalists, and is working for their benefit; classes have not been abolished, and even where state capitalism prevails, its functionaries clearly constitute a new class of exploiters. If all this is true, socialists were even more mistaken than they seemed to be; they fought the wrong enemy at a false front. They laid all evils at the door of private capitalists or "bosses" instead of an institution which seems to be embracing considerably more territory than just private enterprise—we have called it modern industrialism, and its characteristics are a particular rationality and accounting mentality, a necessary division of labor and a functional hierarchy. Not private capital is the enemy but the capitalistic accounting system which holds a man worth as much as he can contribute to the creation of value. Private capitalists are more or less needless costs in a modern industrial system and will be eliminated almost automatically, though slowly, should they prove to be too costly. Socialists still have to fight those who hold the levers of economic and political demand, under whatever title; but on the ideological level these functionaries are better armed than the old capitalists. The capitalist had to justify himself in terms of his usefulness in the promotion of progress; often he could not show cause but was unmasked as a mere parasite.* The functionary barely faces this difficulty; he clearly fulfills a function which is determined by calculation of an electronic brain; he can show that in terms of these calculations he is just as useful as everybody else; he merely executes the equations of the perfect plan. His wages are those of an administrator, and he has earned his share.

If socialism is the functionally most streamlined system of production and distribution, as provided by the most perfect electronic brains

* Mr. Arcadius R. L. Gurland observes in this connection that the anti-capitalist protest was "political" to begin with, namely, under the conditions of a strict European class society, against the owners of a monopoly. Opposition against the "manager," hence, can be aroused in the name of democracy only.

according to the economic equations, then this argument is unanswerable. The little fat which the bureaucrats may skim off the national soup really does not matter if otherwise they give their citizens good service. (Suppose Dave Beck stole a million bucks, that's less than a dollar per "brother"—a thousandfold multiple of which he won for them in wage increases and benefits. Any well-run economy must provide for shrinkage, pilfering and other loss.) Socialists cannot quarrel with the accounting system either, because some accounting there must be to avoid unnecessary waste.

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ON TECHNOLOGICAL GROUNDS, a socialist expert of planning and accounting might not find too much to criticize in the budget of a pseudo-socialist economy. Though the government clerks might conceivably mismanage large sectors of the economy out of prejudice, for political or for purely personal reasons, in general we must assume that a government will be interested in spreading welfare and satisfactions among the population, and will impose sacrifices only if the national interest demands them. It may make honest errors, but these, of course, can be criticized by a loyal opposition and must be corrected within the system of industrial planning. A principled socialist opposition would be called into being whenever the definition of "national welfare" itself is at stake, i.e. if and only if the aims and goals of planning are subject to controversy. Concretely, the government will always be able to show, figures in hand, that output should be increased and that expenses should be increased in those places preferably where greater consumer satisfaction will eventually result in better production. Socialists may argue that they value leisure and easy production schedules higher than national power and larger production facilities, and that consumption allowances should be increased first for the aged and retired people.

The human element in this argument here disrupts the calculations of the planners; the conflict between man and machine, or man and the organization, or man and the rationality of economic reckoning, has not changed, whether the executor of the abstract command of the figures is a private capitalist, a trust manager or a bureaucrat. The function of the socialist in this fight is still the same, whether the enemy be capitalism or socialism. The socialist represents man. To that extent, Marx's analysis of industrial labor is still correct: what he called "constant" costs still are the ones which are given by objective factors, and labor is the only "variable" cost. But he did not surmise that this criticism would still be valid under "socialist" conditions of production.

A graver draw-back of recent advances toward socialism has been uncovered by Gunnar Myrdal. Planning, he says, is necessarily national planning first, and that means erecting protective barriers against the disruptive fluctuations which periodically or constantly are transmitted from the world markets to the national economies. Isolationism serves the interest of socialist benefits; however, it deprives the workers and

consumers in the country of all the checks on mis-planning which normally control a national economy through the countervailing influence of foreign exchanges. Moreover, the closed economy leaves the government free to use foreign commerce for its particular political aims. For instance, the foreign transactions of the Soviet government probably are the single part of the world economy which is being carried out with the least regard to cost; by that token, this operation might be called the "least capitalistic," but it is so conducted only for reasons of foreign policy and any benefit to the people which might accrue from it is strictly accidental.

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TO REPEAT, and to cross the t's: socialism should not be capitalism minus capitalists, nor the most advanced, streamlined system of industrial accountability; it cannot even be defined as a democratic system of such rational industrial relations properly institutionalized. On the contrary, socialists enter the picture precisely at the point where such a system breaks down and people refuse to obey the abstract law of efficiency. Socialists, at their best, always will represent the human protest against any system, and that is even more true if the system is more rational and more efficient and if the human factor is being managed more "scientifically." The human sense of dignity revolts against the dependence upon command powers, be they economic or political.

The Traffic Commissioner is committed (and has been commissioned) to see that "The Traffic" flows freely. It is a measure of our "socialization" that nobody defends jaywalkers.

Our aim was to deprive people of the power to use other people as means to an end, be that end ever so worthy—the increase of productivity or the national welfare. This must remain the attitude of socialists under all systems. However, theoretical considerations and the evidence of recent history suggest that this conflict between man and things, or freedom and necessity, cannot be resolved. Then the aim is to check the command powers through the countervailing powers of labor and other organizations.

The pluralistic system which this implies cannot be justified on the ground that it is more efficient than straight capitalism or straight despotism. It is not, and either of these systems will normally be more efficient. But it gives people a chance to wreck plans which were made without their consent, to assert their will and to make their own mistakes. System-builders are so well-intentioned as to prevent people from making wrong decisions. They will do everything for the people except allow them to do anything for themselves. Even some enthusiasts of countervailing powers envisage them as a system, i.e. they presume that various powers sooner or later will become institutionalized and freeze into a well-organized system where, e.g., wage conflicts are superseded completely by a pyramid of negotiation and arbitration machinery which in the end will figure out what part of the national product each popu-

lation group should get. Eventually this can be done by an especially built computer. Socialists may find a pluralistic system more suitable for their purpose but they will try to prevent its freezing into a system. They must be very flexible in promoting and checking the countervailing powers at the right times.

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PHILOSOPHY has not found a solution to the problem of conflict, nor does historical evidence suggest any avenue of escape. The famous "leap into the realm of Freedom" has not been defined as the conquest of Necessity, but as insight into its pattern, or as choice between alternative aims. Reactionaries have seized upon this insight in asking the silly (because incomplete) question: Freedom for what? Choice which is the essence of freedom always is between possibilities; hence freedom is "for what" only to the extent that it is "from what." To conceal this dichotomy is a sleight-of-hand by which freedom is made to disappear. There is no genuine freedom if the choice is limited within a system. Freedom must always remain the liberty of refusing cooperation, of debating "necessity" and of disregarding "reason." Because Necessity and Reason always will be the specific patterns of the existing society, freedom can exist only if alternative frames of reference are offered by competing powers. Hence the system of countervailing powers should be as widely open as possible, the aim being not only to check the command powers of the ruling hierarchy but to establish the pattern of choices itself.

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SOCIALISTS, QUA labor, do not represent the human "factor" in the production equation; they represent the human element in society. That is to say, they break every equation. They are not interested in establishing a system with a better equation (though they often pretend to be doing that), but in saving man from being a factor in an equation. What matters to them is the point where the equation breaks and man emerges, not where a new equation is formed and man again is being integrated into a new system. Socialism so understood as the action of socialists, is not a social and economic system but a movement. Proudly expressing the essence of Labor at its best, Bernstein said: The goal is nothing to me, the Movement is everything. Marx's healthy contempt for wielders of "programs" is too well known to need quoting here, and even the great utopians only used their programs to realize their secret aim—to set people in motion. This is not to cite the Church Fathers as authorities, but to answer the question whether we can still call ourselves socialists in the same sense that they did. I think we can; socialism in this sense will be the slogan when in Poland, Yugoslavia and elsewhere people raise their demands for more self-determination and participation in deciding their own and their country's fate. Oppressed socialists under "socialism" are in the same position as Christians who uphold Christ against the churches.

Socialism is first of all movement, it is a freely organized movement. When the goal is reached, however, the movement may stop; "socialism" dies for want of a cause. Nationalization, welfare and planning—desirable as such—no longer symbolize man's aspiration to master his own destiny; they may well become the symbols of his inability to make responsible choices.

. . .

SOCIALISM is not a thing to have; it cannot be defined. Suppose each worker owns his house and his car, and suppose the new techniques of economic control make it possible for capitalism, (a) to improve living standards, (b) to give people economic security, (c) to narrow class differences—do we then still need socialism? I say yes, because it is a matter of attitudes! It is freedom, or the refusal to submit to command. It is solidarity, or the refusal to forget people over the demands of techniques.

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ONE cannot have socialism. One is a socialist.

(To be continued)

Keeping Up With the Trends Dept.

"There is no politics in *The Square Root of Wonderful*; it is a strictly contemporary play." Diana Trilling, *New Leader*, November 18, 1957.

POWER AND THE STATE

Paul Ricoeur

Every political theory which does not recognize the autonomy of politics *vis a vis* socio-economic history rejects out of hand the following propositions:

that the problem of political power in a socialist economy is not fundamentally different from the same problem in a capitalist economy;
that political power in a socialist economy offers comparable or even greater possibilities for tyranny;
and therefore that public controls as strict as, if not stricter than, those imposed in capitalist societies are necessary under socialism.

The autonomy of politics—for which I shall argue in this essay—seems to me to consist of two characteristics. On the one hand, politics embodies a human relationship which is not reducible to class conflict or socio-economic tensions in general. Even the state that is most in subjection to a dominating class is also a state precisely to the extent that it expresses the fundamental will of the nation as a whole. Moreover, the state as such need not be radically affected by major changes in the economic sphere. Through this primary characteristic, man's political existence develops a specific type of rationality which cannot be reduced to economics.

On the other hand, politics develops evils of its own—evils specific to the exercise of power. These evils cannot be reduced to others, particularly not to economic alienation. Consequently, economic exploitation can disappear while political evil persists. The very means developed by the state to end economic exploitation can provide the occasion for abuses of power, abuses which while new in expression or effect are nonetheless essentially the same in their irrational force as those perpetrated by previous states.

Specific rationality, specific evil: such is the double and paradoxical character of politics. It is the task of political philosophy to educidate the paradox....

I

If the State is simultaneously both more rational and more irrational than the individual, then the great problem of democracy is that of control of the state by the people. Just as the rationality of

the state may not simply be derived from socio-economic history and its evils attributed to class contradictions, so must the problem of the control of the state be viewed as an irreducible one. The problem of controlling the state consists in developing institutional techniques specially designed to make the exercise of power possible and the abuse of power impossible. The concept of "control" proceeds directly from the central paradox of man's political existence, being the *practical* resolution of this paradox. The state should exist, but not in excess; should direct, organize and decide, so that the political animal himself may exist; but the tyrant must not be allowed to rise to power.

Only a political philosophy which has recognized the specific function and specific evil of politics is in a position to state the problem of political control correctly.

It is for this reason that the reduction of political alienation to economic alienation seems to me the weak point in Marxist political thinking. This reduction of political alienation has, in effect, led Marxism-Leninism to substitute for the problem of controlling the state that of its withering away. Even as it projects the end of the evil of the state into an indeterminate future, it underestimates the practical problem of limiting that evil in the present. In promising too much tomorrow, the thesis of the withering away of the state also tolerates too much today.

This notion can also serve as cover and pretext for the perpetuation of terrorism. By a malevolent paradox the thesis of the provisional character of the state becomes the best justification for the endless prolongation of the "dictatorship of the proletariat," thus paving the way for totalitarianism. But it is essential to notice that the theory of the withering away of the state is a logical consequence of the reduction of political alienation to economic alienation. For if the state is solely an organ of repression which arises from class antagonisms and expresses the domination of a class, then the state will disappear when the class division of society is no more. The problem, however, is to know whether the end of private ownership of the means of production will or can entail the end of *all* forms of alienation. Perhaps private ownership is in itself but one form of man's power over man; perhaps money itself is but one among other means of domination; perhaps the same spirit of domination expresses itself in exploitation through money, bureaucratic tyranny, intellectual dictatorship and clericalism.

It is true that Marx, Engels and Lenin attempted to relate to experience the theory of the withering away of the state. They interpreted the Paris Commune as showing that the dictatorship of the proletariat can be something quite different from the simple transfer of the state's repressive power into other hands, that it can actually mean the destruction of the state machine as a "special force" of repression. If the armed people takes the place of the permanent army, if the police can be dismissed at any moment, if the bureaucracy is dismantled as

an organized body and reduced to the lowest salaried condition, then the general force of the majority of the people replaces the repressive special force of the bourgeois state and the beginning of the withering away of the state coincides with the dictatorship of the proletariat. As Lenin said, "*It is impossible to pass from capitalism to socialism without some return to primitive democracy.*" And Marx could even say: "*The commune was no longer a state in the proper sense of the word.*"

In the thinking of Marx and Lenin the withering away thesis was not hypocritical but sincere. Few men have so discounted the state as have the great Marxists: "As long as the proletariat still needs the state," reads the *Letter to Bebel*, "it needs it not to guarantee freedom, but to suppress its enemies, and the day when it will become possible to speak of freedom, the State as such will have ceased to exist."

II

My working hypothesis, by contrast, is that the state cannot wither away; it must be controlled by special institutional techniques.

One must go still further and assert that the socialist state requires a more vigilant popular control than the bourgeois state. And this precisely because the socialist state is the more rational, extending design and planning to areas of human existence that had previously been left to chance or improvisation. Since the rationality of a state which plans to end class division is greater than that of its predecessors, its potential power and the opportunities offered to tyranny are also greater.

The task of a critique of socialist power is to show, lucidly and honestly, the new possibilities of political alienation which are linked to the very struggle against economic alienation and to the increase in state power which that struggle entails.

Here are some directions in which research on the problem of power under socialism might move:

1) One must examine to what degree "the administration of things" is necessarily "a government of persons" and to what degree progress in the administration of things gives rise to an increase in the political power of man over man.

Planning implies choice of an economic character concerning order of priority in the satisfaction of needs and in the utilization of the means of production. But immediately this choice becomes more than economic. It is a function of a general politics, that is, of a long-term project concerning the orientation of the human community. The ratio of part reinvested to part consumed, the proportion of cultural to material goods in the general equilibrium of the plan derives from a total strategic vision in which economics injects itself into politics. A plan is a technique put at the service of a project animated by implicit values, of a project which in the last analysis concerns the very humanity of man. That is why politics is the soul of economics insofar as it expresses both will and power.

Thus, an administration of things cannot be substituted for a government of persons, because the rational technique of ordering man's needs and works on the macroscopic scale of the state cannot wholly free itself from the ethical-cultural context. Moreover, it is political power which in the final instance mediates between the latent aspirations of the human community and the technological means derived from knowledge of economic laws. This linkage of ethics and technique in the planning "task" is the fundamental reason why an administration of things implies a government of persons.

2) It must also be shown how reinforcement of state power, linked to the growth of the socialist state's spheres of action, develops *possibilities of abuses intrinsic to it as a socialist state*. This will be putting to use the idea developed above that the most rational state has the greatest opportunities for being irrational.

Engels has clearly demonstrated in his *Anti-Dühring* that, as long as there persist the old division of labor and the other alienations which make of work a burden rather than a joy, the organization of production will remain authoritarian and repressive even after the expropriation of the expropriators. The allotment and the choice of work, when the latter is not spontaneous, still arises from coercion and that coercion is linked to the transition from chance to rationalization.

The temptation of forced labor thus becomes one of the greatest available to the socialist state. Since planning gives this state the *economic* monopoly over psychological coercion (culture, press and propaganda are comprehended in the plan and thus *economically* determined by the state), it will have at its disposal a whole arsenal of means, ranging from stimulation and emulation to deportation.

To opportunities for abuse which thus arise must be added the temptation to overcome irrational opposition by means more rapid than those of discussion and education. The rational state, in effect, encounters resistance of all sorts. There is, for example, the resistance characteristic of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie who cannot adapt to the rhythm of the technocrats but remain adjusted to former conditions. This may be dismissed as merely an habituation to outmoded economic conditions; but not all forms of resistance are so readily explained. The planning state, which thinks in terms of generations, has a project more vast and more remote than has the individual, whose interest is more immediate, usually limited to the horizon of his own life-span or that of his children. The state and the individual do not share the same time scheme and thus the individual develops interests which are not easily reconciled to the needs of the state. We are aware of at least two manifestations of this dichotomy between the state's goal and that of the citizen. One concerns the division between investment and immediate consumption, the other the determination of norms and tempo in production. The micro-interests of individuals and the macro-decisions of power are in constant tension, and this tension de-

velops a dialectic of individual demand and state compulsion which makes misuse of power possible...

In short, the socialist state is more "ideological" than the "liberal" state. It can reclaim for itself the old dreams of unifying the domain of truth in an orthodoxy encompassing all the manifestations of knowledge and all expressions of the human word. Under the pretext of revolutionary discipline and technocratic efficiency, the socialist state can justify the complete regimentation of human minds. It can do this, because it enjoys a monopoly over the means of subsistence.

All these thoughts converge towards the same conclusion: if it is true that the socialist state rather than abolishing the power problem, renews it; if it is true that it advances its rationality and increases opportunities for perversion, then the problem of democratic control of the state is even more urgent in a socialist than in a capitalist regime and the myth of the withering away of the state is an obstacle to a systematic treatment of this problem.

3) The third task of a critique of power in a socialist regime would be to reassess the critique of the liberal state in the light of this idea of democratic control. The aim here would be to distinguish which of the institutional arrangements of the liberal state are independent of the phenomenon of class domination and specifically adapted to limiting abusive power. Almost inevitably the liberal state had to appear as a hypocritical medium for permitting economic exploitation. But today, after the bitter experience of Stalinism, the distinction between an instrument of class domination and democratic control in general thrusts itself upon us. Perhaps the principle of this revaluation is contained within Marxism itself, in that it teaches us that a class in its ascendant phase fulfills a universal function. In discovering the problem of democratic controls, the *philosophes* of the 18th century discovered true liberalism, which doubtless transcends the destiny of the bourgeoisie. Liberal politics carried an element of universality because it was attuned to the universal problem of the state, beyond that of its specifically bourgeois form.

This is why the revival of liberal politics is possible within a socialist context.

III

I should like to give several examples of this discrimination between the "universal" and "bourgeois" aspects of the liberal State:

1) Is not the independence of the judge the very first means of recourse against the abuse of power? It seems to me that the judge is a personage who, by the consent of all, must be voluntarily placed on the border of fundamental conflicts of society.

Some will say that the independence of the judge is an abstraction. Precisely! Society requires for its human respiration an "ideal" function, a willed abstraction in which it projects the idea of legality which

legitimizes the reality of power. Without this projection, in which the state represents itself as lawful, the individual is at the mercy of the state and power itself is unprotected against its own arbitrariness. It is clear that, among other reasons, the trials of Moscow, Budapest and Prague were possible because the independence of the judge was not technically insured nor ideologically established in a theory of the judge as man above class, as abstraction in human guise, as law incarnate. Stalin was possible because there were always judges to judge according to his decree.

2) Is not the second condition for permanent appeal against the misuse of power that citizens should have access to sources of information, of knowledge and science, independent of those of the state? We have seen that the modern state, from the time that it economically orients all man's choices through the large decisions of its planners, determines his way of life. *And if the citizens cannot by themselves form opinions concerning these massive decisions*, this power will be less and less distinguishable from totalitarian power.

The planning state, more than any other, requires the counter force of public opinion in the true sense of the term, that is, a public which has opinions and opinion which has public expression. This implies a press which belongs to its readers and not to the state, and whose freedom of inquiry and expression are constitutionally and economically guaranteed. Stalin was possible because no public opinion could begin to criticize him. And even now it is the post-Stalinist state alone which has condemned Stalin; the people have not been allowed to speak.

These two concepts are so important that it is upon them that Stalinism foundered. The revolts in eastern Europe crystallized around the "abstract" ideas of *justice* and *truth*. If the intellectuals, writers and artists played a decisive role in these events, it was because the stake—despite poverty and low salaries—was not economic and social; the stake was political: the new "alienation" which infected political power. Now the problem of political alienation, as we know it since Plato's *Gorgias*, is the problem of *non-truth*; we have also learned of it through the Marxist critique of the bourgeois state founded on non-truth, on seeming, mystifying and lying. It is precisely here that the intellectual as such is involved in politics. He finds himself pressed to the very fore of the revolution, not merely into the ranks, when its motive force is more political than economic, when it concerns the relationship of power to truth and justice.

3) Thus it seems to me that a labor democracy requires a certain dialectic between the state and the independent workers' organizations. We have seen that the long-range interests of the state, even aside from economic problems, do not coincide immediately with those of the workers. This is evident in a socialist period in the precise sense of the term, that is a period of inequality of salaries and professional specialization which places workers, managers, intellectuals in opposition to one an-

other. It is also apparent in a period of rapid and even forced industrialization. Consequently, only a legitimated structuring of the tensions between the state and the trade unions representing the diverse interests of the workers can guarantee the groping search for a viable equilibrium, one which is both economically profitable and humanly tolerable. The right to strike in particular seems to me to be the only recourse of the workers against the state, even against the workers' state. The postulate that the will of the socialist state and the interests of all the workers directly coincide is a pernicious illusion and a dangerous pretext for the abuse of state power.

4) In short, the key is that of control of the state by the people, by the democratically organized base. Do a plurality of parties, the technique of "free elections," and parliamentary government arise from the "universality" of the liberal state or do they belong irremediably to the bourgeois period of that state? One need not have a preconceived idea. It is certain that planning techniques demand that the socialist form of production be as irrevocable as the republican form of our [French] government. Carrying out a plan demands plain powers, a stable government and a long-term budget. Now our [French] parliamentary techniques of alternating majorities in power does not seem very compatible with the tasks of the new state rationality. On the other hand it is no less certain that free discussion is a vital necessity for the state: discussion gives it impetus and orientation, discussion curbs its abuses. Democracy is discussion. Thus in one way or another discussion must be *organized*, and it is here that the question of parties poses itself. The case for the multiple parties system is advanced by the fact that in the past this system has not only reflected tensions between social groups as determined by class division, but has also furnished an organization for political discussion as such, thus having "universal" and not only "bourgeois" meaning. Analysis of the concept of the party solely in terms of socio-economic interests seems to me dangerously simplistic. This is why the notions of multiple parties and single party must not be judged solely from the point of view of class dynamics, but also from the point of view of techniques for controlling the state.

I do not know if the term "political liberalism" can be saved from discredit. Perhaps it has been definitively compromised by linkage with economic liberalism. But if the term can be saved, it will express that which must be said: whether the state establishes liberty through its rationality or whether liberty, through resistance, limits the irrationality of power, the central problem of politics is liberty.

Translated from the French by LEONARD PRAGER

PARTY MACHINES AND DEMOCRACY

Ignazio Silone

The boundless power of the party machine over public life is constantly being confirmed; in private conversation and on the printed page we return to this problem in the weary tones of recrimination and impotence. Is there any point, we ask ourselves, in continuing to talk of democracy? On the other hand, is a democracy conceivable without parties? And a modern party without its machinery?

I remember a sentence of Karl Radek's from the days when the crushing power of the Stalinist machine was beginning to take form. "Once," he said, "Russia was under the rule of a matriarchy, then a patriarchy ruled, now we are entering the age of the secretariarchy."

Today we also live in an age when bureaucrats are tyrants. The regime of the secretariat has expanded rapidly in every country, civilized and uncivilized alike. The Secretary General has become the true representative of our times, while the old oligarchies of prominent citizens (survivors of the political *geriarchy*), heads of the Mafia, publicists, great orators) are thrust from their pedestal. Among these notables a few have saved themselves—by serving as rubber stamps for one or another of the more efficient machines; the cynical ones excuse their actions, pleading the necessities of the times, the hypocrites invoke "the lesser of two evils."

Curiously enough, the pretense of fighting the dangers of Communism or of clericalism—always for the sake of liberty—can lead with terrible ease to the surrender of all personal freedom. This surrender is justified, naturally, on grounds of expediency: once again the means devour the end. In view of the present situation it is not an exaggeration to say that Italian political life today is almost completely Stalinized. For the technique of the modern machine undoubtedly has that origin. This is the irony of the strategy of the opposition: the fear of the enemy leads to imitation. The Communists copy the clerical party, and the Democratic-Christian civic committees imitate the Communists. Do you wish proof of this? In those fortunate Western countries where the Communist following is small, the democratic parties have less rigid organizations. Our own situation is far worse. With us the anti-Communist mass organizations have come to adopt, bit by bit, the whole Stalinist system: the block and factory factions, the small organized cells in the cooperatives, the *agit-prop* in the crowd, the meetings reserved

for the most active members, the party schools at every level of organization, and finally, what is most important and most essential for Stalinism, the two-faced ideology, one, opportunistic and demagogic, for the mass public, the other for the initiates of the central apparatus.

As the Stalinist technique of arousing, stupefying and brutally managing the masses is imitated by the opposition, the Communist machine is given a taste of its own medicine, far more sour than the usual dose doled out by the Social-Democrats. Finally even their insipid and reactionary cult of force has turned against them, for the suspicion is growing among their followers that the greater quantity of force now lies with their opponents. The trouble is, however, that Stalinism by now has seriously contaminated and perverted those public energies which, up to about forty years ago, seemed to be the most promising resources of liberty.

SINCE OUR POLITICAL LITERATURE lingers on abstract themes, digesting and redigesting them, we do not yet have a complete or profound study of the party machines. However, no careful observer can miss their most salient characteristics. Daily events are enough to refresh the memory even of the inattentive. Occasionally, it still happens that some surviving oligarch dominates the dull sittings of a political convention. However, the activities of the committees and the final vote are determined by the party machine. Careful checking of delegate credentials would reveal that the machine has usurped the representation of many party constituencies through a fictitious inflation of the membership. Yet the violations of the party constitution, the offenses to fair play, do not provoke the expected dramatic protest. Why not? The timid members remain silent out of party loyalty (the enemy is listening!); the ambitious ones, in order not to jeopardize their future candidacy, the necessary support on the preferential ballot, the hope for an office.

Add to this the fact that the central organization of every important political party administers enormous funds about which, it is well understood, no accounts need be rendered, either as to their source or their use. Further, though this may appear even more strange, no one at any party convention ever rises to demand a financial report or to request the appointment of a committee for financial control. This is the point we have reached.

The change which has taken place in our democracy can be roughly estimated if we remember that at a Socialist Party convention forty years ago Filippo Turati asked to have Constantino Lazzari investigated because the recorded expense for some twine seemed to him incredible. (And this in a matter involving only a few liras and Constantino Lazzari...).

It is not surprising that the internal organization of the parties contributes greatly to worsen the political and moral climate of all public

life, for our democracy is first of all a democracy of parties. Those who are not aware of this, learn it by reading the newspapers. The General Secretaries of the parties appoint the ministers and dismiss them. The ears of the prefects are sweetly receptive to the wishes of the provincial secretaries. Finally, we reach this conclusion: as long as our democratic mechanism is, in fact, based mainly upon the parties (and under the present social system we cannot conceive of a substitute for them) and as long as the parties are empty floats moved only by their machinery, the democracy of the Republic will remain greatly limited, if not, indeed, entirely non-existent.

But the greatest mistake lies in believing that this situation is inevitable.

SUCCESS IS A JUSTIFICATION only for the feeble-minded. However, we must not overlook the fascination that certain words such as "modernity" and "efficiency" exercise even over the well educated. These represent the quintessence of the self-justification offered by the renowned engineers of our political machines. But why should it become necessary to oppose modernity and efficiency? These two qualities are perfectly acceptable—but there are conditions. They must facilitate the active and conscious participation in the development of party policy of all who have the capacity and desire; they must favor the free growth and elaboration of political ideas among the party's membership; they must guarantee to that membership the control of every facet of the organization.

It seems to me, however, that I am slighting no one when I say that the party machines exist for quite different purposes. They are executive machines; by monopolizing all the work of the party, from research down to the most simple, material tasks, they deliberately encourage the apathy of their memberships. They are machines, which, in their proposals and their activity, destroy the popular foundation of the party and reduce it to a hollow chorus, a mass which can be manipulated. The effect of this is predictable. Sooner or later the party machines prepare their fatal punishment: the degeneration of their party and its downfall. Their much-vaunted expediency fails in the end to justify itself.

It is now the common opinion that only a political defeat can free a party from its bureaucratic strait-jacket. This is enough to inspire defeatist sentiments in the suffering and impotent minorities. And, of course, there are precedents which encourage them... It is even possible that the various minority currents among the Italian Social Democrats entertain such hopes concerning their own party.

We, however, do not believe that defeat can act as a cure. If it could, then socialism, whether Italian or international, would by now have attained a godly perfection... Right now the real problem, of

all parties, is to guarantee a minimum of freedom to those Italians who are interested in public life.

Are there any remedies for the grave dangers of the machines?

It is necessary, first of all, to admit that modern parties and unions can no longer do without bureaucratic machinery. Before this necessity was realized, but when the bureaucratization of the workers' movement had already become a problem, the revolutionary unions of the French CGT devised a remedy both radical and romantic. They decreed that no union officer could be re-elected; after serving his term he was to return to the office or factory and continue to earn his living as before. This draconian decision remained inapplicable. The reasons are evident. It would have been disastrous for a labor union periodically to lose its leaders just when they had begun to know their duties, and to have constantly to call upon men without experience. In addition, militant unionists, all-too-well-known for their activity in strikes and other labor agitations were not likely to be rehired by their old firms, nor would, in any case, the psychological impact of a return to the old routine be unimportant. (It is certainly admirable that Pierre Monatte, director of the *Vie Ouvrière* during the first World War, returned to his work in the printing business, where, in spite of his old age, he is still employed; but this is an exception to the general rule.)

The rule is, we repeat, that no modern party or union which is even minimally organized, can do without a bureaucratic mechanism. The problem is how to prevent the machine from emptying party or union of their real content and substituting itself. After all that has been said, this may seem like an attempt to square the circle. But in human relations there are no insoluble problems; and it is preferable to hit one's head against the wall a hundred times rather than admit that there exists a situation beyond solution. Why complain? Something must be attempted.

The following suggestions by no means add up to a complete answer, but they may serve as indicators, and, as they are in accord with my own experience, may be worthy of further investigation.

- 1) The members of the party bureaucracy must be guaranteed a living standard equal to that of members of corresponding categories in private. (Only a non-precarious economic situation can free the officials from their obligation to serve the ever-shifting leaders.)
- 2) No bureaucrats, of whatever rank, can serve as delegates to the conventions. (This rule has the same political and moral justification as the law which forbids political activity to state officials.)
- 3) The members of the party executive and of the national administration cannot be candidates for political elections. (This rule, which to the interested parties may seem sheer folly, is

currently in force in some Scandinavian workers' parties and was also a regulation of the Italian Socialist Party unions before 1919, with excellent results.)

- 4) A commission appointed at the party or union convention, including the representatives of the minorities, must be able to examine the financial reports, and if necessary all the administrative documents of the organization. This same control must also be put into effect on the local level.
- 5) Free contacts, exchanges and friendships among members ought to be fostered (especially in the big cities, where general assemblies are impossible because of the great number of members) by the organization of clubs, and by periodicals devoted to cultural and political matters.

We hope now that whoever has had to struggle, or is at present struggling, with these difficulties, will take courage and express his ideas...

FINALLY, to console ourselves let us reread a letter written by P. J. Proudhon, at that time 37 years old, to Karl Marx, then 28:

"My dear Mr. Marx,

Let us seek together, if you wish, the laws of society, the manner in which these laws are realized, the process by which we shall succeed in discovering them; but, for God's sake, after having demolished all the *a priori* dogmatisms, do not let us in our turn dream of indoctrinating the people; let us not fall into the same contradiction as your countryman, Martin Luther, who after having overthrown Catholic theology, began at once with the help of excommunications and anathemas, to found a Protestant theology... I applaud with all my heart your thought of bringing to light all opinions; let us carry on a good and loyal polemic; let us give the world the example of a learned and far-sighted tolerance, but let us not, because we are at the head of a movement, make ourselves the leaders of a new intolerance, let us not pose as the apostles of a new religion, even if it is the religion of logic and reason. Let us gather together and encourage all protests, let us condemn all exclusiveness... let us never regard a question as exhausted... On this condition, I will gladly enter into your association. Otherwise—no!"

GERMANY: DOUBTS AND DILEMMAS

Wolfgang Abendroth

The German election this past fall followed a pattern that had already been set four years earlier. Then, as now, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) entered a national election with some reason for hope. During the last four years it had been steadily gaining in local elections and Adenauer's Christian Democrats (CDU) as steadily losing—a trend even sharper than during the equivalent period between 1949 and 1953. In October 1956, for example, the SPD became the dominant party in the most industrialized states of Western Germany, polling 44 per cent of the vote in Northrhine-Westphalia and 47 per cent in Hessen. It gained majorities in almost all the city Councils of the big industrial towns in these crucial states.* Data gathered in the early months of 1957 by the Institute of Public Opinion Research at Allensbach led to similar expectations for the national election just ahead.

But these illusions were soon to be shattered: the defeat of 1953 was repeated. Though it increased its percentage of the national vote from 28.2 per cent to 31.8 per cent, the SPD remains a minority party. By contrast,

the Christian Democrats won 50.2 per cent and gained an absolute majority in the Bundestag, a situation with few parallels in German electoral history.

To what can these defeats be attributed? Is there no way for the German Social Democracy to gain a majority? Is the rule of Adenauer and his CDU the inevitable fate of the West German Republic? Or might it be brought to an end if the SPD, as many German observers urge, were to transform itself from a party of democratic socialism into a somewhat more liberal version of the CDU?

The Social Structure Of the German Electorate

Historical phenomena can be understood and acted upon only if one relies on more than the external appearance of things. The SPD "reformers" who set the tone for the last campaign, and who comprise a large segment of the party's intelligentsia, insist that the defeat suffered in both national elections is a result of the party's inability to win the votes of the independent middle class and the professionals. They argue that as long as the SPD remains a class party holding fast to socialist goals which, by their nature, alienate the intermediate layers of the population, it can only expect defeat.

* The recent Social Democratic victory in the Hamburg municipal elections seems to confirm the pattern of local gains that cannot be carried over into national elections.—*Editors.*

But the questions then arise: could the SPD have won even if it had had the support of a significant part of the German middle class? And how important, in any case, is this middle class in German social life?

The occupation census of 1950 revealed that 70.8 per cent of the German labor force consisted of employees, as compared to 66.7 per cent in 1939. By 1956, according to statistics from the Bureau of Unemployment Insurance, this proportion had risen to 75.4 per cent. From 1939 to 1956 the proportion of self-employed had fallen from 14.9 to 13.5 per cent and that of members of their families in business with them, from 18.4 per cent to 11.1 per cent. According to the Institute for Public Opinion Research, out of every 100 gainfully employed workers in Germany today, 44 are skilled laborers, 4 farm laborers, 19 white collar workers, 6 officials, 11 farm owners and only 13 self-employed. As for the alleged numerical importance of the intelligentsia, the following figures should be revealing: fully 80 per cent of the eligible voters in Germany have never had more than elementary schooling, while only 6 per cent hold a higher degree.

Thus, of the gainfully employed electorate, more than half are workers and only a small proportion of the white collar workers and officials can be said to belong to the higher executive strata. Where then, it may be asked, is the reservoir of potential voters for the German Social Democratic Party to be located?

The Myth of a "Classless Middle Class" Society

The majority of the German working class, it must be said, possesses only

a slight awareness of its objective interests. A good many workers have more or less come to accept the thesis, long advocated by various German academicians and now even by several leading intellectuals in the SPD, that our highly industrialized "mass society," despite the continued existence of capitalist property relations, is "classless." The workers, as well as everyone else, it is asserted, gain from the steady increase in productivity by receiving higher wages and fuller social security benefits. As a result, so the argument goes, there no longer exists an objective conflict of interests between the workers and those who command power. And furthermore, the true representatives of economic power are now the managers who have increasingly taken over control of industry from its formal owners, the stockholders.

No matter how deeply this thesis has penetrated into the thinking of large portions of the working class nor how eagerly it is being debated in the press and by the intellectuals, it is as far removed from the facts as the previously cited assumption about the numerical importance of the self-employed and the intellectuals. What is usually overlooked is that the objective conflicts of interest revolve not only about shares in consumer goods but also and essentially about control over decision-making in high places. In addition, it must be kept in mind that the current, though still inadequate, position of the lower social strata in the consumer goods market, was not freely given to them by those in power but was rather reluctantly granted either as a concession to pressure groups, frequently only after bitter struggles, or in order to soften pol-

itical opposition. Despite the myth of a "people's capitalism," it is evident that economic control is now the monopoly of an ever narrowing stratum of men. Nor has anti-trust and anti-cartel legislation been able to alter this trend, as is shown in a recent study by Kurt Pritzkolets of economic power relations in Western Germany.

In any case, the actual political behavior of finance capital has been clear enough. Through their generous financing of the Adenauer coalition in both 1953 and 1957, big business and finance have shown that they at least have a firm grasp of the realities of power. As a result, it would be a grave error for the SPD, traditionally the agency of independent political opinion within the working class, to refrain from criticizing the ideology which the rulings groups impose upon or help spread in the lower social strata. For even if the SPD were to "leave a door open to the right" or to give up its goal of the socialization of the means of production, it is not likely that the political strategy of big business would change. And if the SPD did abandon whatever remains of its claim to socialism, it would irrevocably lose any chance for electoral victory, first because such a move would alienate the most politically aware segments of the working class who thus far have constituted the party's most reliable supporters, and second because the voters who have come to believe that this is "the best of all possible worlds" would then, understandably, see no reason for abandoning the CDU.

That the "classless middle class" notion, whether in its liberal and neo-liberal or in its Christian Socialist forms, has come to be the ruling ide-

ology of Western Germany, seems indisputable. And so long as this ideology governs the thoughts and feelings of the majority of the voters—that is, a large section of the working class—they will be particularly vulnerable to carefully designed propaganda. Such propaganda has behind it all the resources of modern public opinion research, the support of most of the press, and the power of those committed to the *status quo*. The SPD, at a heavy financial and technical disadvantage, cannot hope to compete with the streamlined methods of this propaganda—and particularly so if it cannot rely on a stable and rational self-awareness of the working class, traditionally the major resource of the European socialist movement.

Electoral Manipulation Through Anxiety

The methods used in the propaganda offensives of the CDU in both 1953 and 1957 depended primarily upon a skillful manipulation of public anxiety. Each time it played upon the understandable emotions aroused by the threat of Communism, first in regard to the East German revolt of June 1953 and then the Hungarian revolution of 1956. That the latter could be used as an electoral issue a year after its occurrence was primarily due to the success of the CDU and its sympathetic press in keeping the parallel activities of the Western powers in North Africa and the Middle East from reaching the depths of public consciousness. Secondly, the CDU exploited public anxiety over a decline in the economy whose development and prosperity had been falsely attributed to government policy.

Both in 1953 and 1957 the CDU

could count upon a general disintegration of social consciousness among the German people (partly the legacy of the Third Reich), as well as upon the fact that the portion of voters which lacks even a semblance of rational social consciousness can be expected to behave as the petty bourgeois has done throughout its history. When beset by irrational fears, such strata of the population always tend to obey those parties and leaders that guarantee them their social status and with it their self-confidence. Moreover, the Adenauer regime with the help of ruling groups of the United States had at least proposed certain concrete policies. By contrast the Social Democrats, in the midst of abandoning their own principles and not daring to defend their proclaimed goals, cannot hope to attract this fluctuating segment of voters. A political party which adapts itself uncritically to poll results instead of analyzing them for what they really are, has no chance whatever precisely among those voters who lack social awareness or rationality in politics. *For whoever reflects in his own bearing and speech the mood of uncertainty and indecisiveness of these groups loses the chance for winning their support.* This is why, despite initially favorable chances, the SPD failed in its attempts to replace the issue of anxiety over Communism with that of anxiety over the atom bomb. And only in part can this failure be attributed to the smaller financial means available to the SPD.

The SPD failed even to challenge effectively the notion of sustained economic stability. Its warnings of a rise in prices were simply not heeded. The agreement of industry and the mining companies to keep prices at their cur-

rent levels until the end of the election campaign, no matter how transparent a maneuver this was, sufficed to allay the gnawing suspicions of the hesitant or uncertain voters. They saw in the rent reform, that half-hearted concession of the regime to the Opposition, a present to the masses as well as a proof of the growth of business guaranteed by the CDU. The SPD did not dare shake this belief in 1957, much as it had not dared in 1927 when both the official economic spokesmen and the leaders of the Social Democrats believed in the invincibility of the market. Thus, the unconscious anxiety of the masses over Communism and economic crisis lent itself to the successful manipulation by Adenauer propaganda. The regime could present itself as the saviour of the stability of the DeutschMark, even though its policy of rapid armament would inevitably lead to a devaluation of the DeutschMark in the face of higher prices for consumer goods. It was able to do all these things because the SPD did not risk an energetic full-fledged attack.

Nevertheless, all of these sins of omission are hardly the main reason why the SPD has been defeated in all the national elections despite its good showing in by-elections. More significant is the fact that the opinions of large segments of the German working class can be manipulated in the ways just described. This is particularly true for those segments composed of white collar workers, officials, and the wives of workers, whose politics resemble, if not sociologically, then psychologically, the politics of the so-called independent middle classes. As long as this manipulation continues, based as it is on the thesis that cur-

rent society knows no fundamental social contradictions, the SPD has no chance to win an election in which finance capital fights it with all the economic means at its command. The outlook for victory is dimmer still if the SPD should decide to surrender even more to the fluctuating opinions of the lower middle class or of those segments of the working class that have accepted the thesis of a society in which class conflict has been eliminated. One thing is certain: the SPD will never be able to iterate with greater piety the myth of the "Christian West" than the professional formulators of this ideology, the leaders of the CDU. For the SPD to conduct its campaigns on the basis of hysteria rather than by trying to develop the rational political awareness of the voters which does not of course preclude an appeal to their emotions as well, would mean utterly to destroy its chances and therewith democracy in Bundesrepublik. Even an economic crisis might not change the situation. For only if the workers had already attained a certain degree of self-awareness would such a crisis give both them and the SPD a chance. Without such awareness, an economic crisis even more than artificially induced anxiety could lead to hysterical mass movements under fascist leaders.

Is There a Way Out?

The sole chance for the German Social Democrats lies in systematically and purposefully changing this situation by recreating the social consciousness of the largest and most decisive group in Germany, the workers. Here it is necessary once again to relate these groups to the goal which corresponds to their own objective inter-

ests as well as to those of society as a whole: the socialization of the basic means of production. Given such a resurgence of socialist consciousness among the German workers, a large number of middle class voters might then be attracted to this powerful new social force.

The reigning consciousness in a society is always that of the ruling class. Even the socially inferior strata are necessarily bound to this model as long as they lack vantage points for developing an independent and critical opinion. The Third Reich destroyed these vantage points and is thus responsible for the fact that those workers who were politically aware before 1933 proved unable to transmit their heritage to the younger generation or to develop further their own thinking. Had the SPD systematically engaged in socialist education during the past decade, this gap might have been overcome, but since it did not, a large number of workers have come to feel as they did after 1933: since they are the objects of decisions made by others, they might as well live for the moment and not bother their heads about social goals or ideas.

Still another reason for this kind of response among the workers was the recreation of the German army, under pressure from the United States and in response to the methods of Stalinist rule. The SPD leadership did not know how to organize the only spontaneous mass reaction which has occurred in Germany since the Adenauer "restoration," namely the popular feeling against the rearmament that has repeatedly been manifested since 1951, nor did it know how to make use of this issue in order to create a more enduring social conscious-

ness. In many instances, moreover, the SPD accepted the ideologies stemming from the "restoration," so that its concepts were frequently identical with those of the CDU.

Nonetheless, it would be a mistake to conclude that the possibilities for creating a firm social consciousness among the workers have been eliminated—provided, that is, that the SPD makes itself a focus for crystallizing this consciousness.

The British Labor Party has managed to create, though under more favorable circumstances, an adequate image of such a political party in a highly industrialized, essentially capitalist society. The BLP maintains its character as the instrument through which the workers can express their political awareness. It holds fast to the goal of the democratization of society through the socialization of the central economic institutions, a goal which, far later than the SPD, it earned in the experience of battle. Continual education in party democracy is maintained by internal political conflict without thereby sacrificing, through the inevitable formation of splinter groups, the authority of the party leadership. For such reasons the party is able to appeal to and attract not only the workers but also the housewives and portions of the middle class; it gives the impression of being a real political force and not the belated echo of the discarded theories of the conservatives. And it dares, on such important political occasions as the Suez crisis, to provide the means for expression of popular opinion.

The SPD can be freed from its current isolation only if it consciously adopts the British Labor Party as its model and if it realizes that it must become the leader of the workers in their political and social opposition to finance capital. It must be motivated to make visible this opposition in the day to day social and economic struggles, in internal as well as in foreign affairs, and in political and cultural activities. It must keep in mind that the masses can develop a stable social consciousness only through actual political participation. Only by continual discussions within the party, conducted in the public eye, can it give the German electorate, fixated as it is on the anti-democratic principle of the leader, an example of living democracy and sound critical self-awareness. Only if it lets practical experience demonstrate that the interests of the workers coincide with those of the whole society but are distinct from the special interests of the men who currently have economic power (who, for example, promised, in the heat of the election campaign, that prices would stay at their current levels but who casually allowed a rise in prices a few weeks later) can it effectively appeal to the middle classes. But if the SPD loses the capacity to act as a political counterbalance to the CDU, then the equilibrium on which West German democracy rests will be destroyed and the road to the authoritarian and, at the slightest social upheaval, the totalitarian state will again be open.

Translated from the German
by SUZANNE KELLER

DJILAS AND BISMARCKIAN SOCIALISM

Michael Harrington

In the last year or so, theory has become news. The debate over the character of the changes taking place in Russian society has been carried on, not merely by a few radical intellectuals, but by government officials, newspapermen, indeed by anyone with the faintest interest in politics. We can measure the curious intensity of this discussion by noting only two of the recent articles which are a part of it. In their November, 1957, issue, the editors of the *Monthly Review*, long the most sophisticated apologists for the "progressiveness" of Russian totalitarianism, published an editorial filled with a near-anguished doubt about their most fundamental assumptions. And at almost the same time, Sidney Hook was putting forth an analysis of the Gomułka regime in *Partisan Review* which was startling in its sympathetic attitude toward and perhaps even its illusions about Polish Communism.

The reason for such shifts is clear enough. The Twentieth Russian Party Congress, the Polish and Hungarian Octobers, Sputnik, two major purges—these constitute a torrent of new facts which challenge every preconception and demand a re-examination of all

[For a discussion that supplements this article, readers are referred to "Authoritarians of the Left" by Lewis Coser and Irving Howe, *DISSENT*, Winter 1955. — EDITORS]

premises. Amidst all this, one book, Milovan Djilas' *The New Class*,* has a unique distinction. It is simultaneously a political event in the East European anti-Communist Revolution, a new fact, and an attempt to deal theoretically with that Revolution.

It is not that Djilas has written a definitive analysis of Communism. His passionate apostasy from Tito was completed in a jail, not in an atmosphere of scholarly quiet. *The New Class* contains some over-large generalizations and not a few illusions about the West and inevitable tendencies toward world unification. Nonetheless, it represents a major statement of a basic view about Communism.

I
Djilas in his book asserts that the Communist bureaucracy is a new ruling class, and he does so from within the framework of a democratic socialist world-view.

In dealing with this assertion, it is all too easy to plunge into a debate over the definition of a ruling class. But often that is to obscure the really important political point. The fundamental basis of Djilas' theory can be more valuably described in empirical terms, as an expectation, a prediction and the expression of deep political

* Praeger. \$3.95.

values. Djilas and those who share his general approach set sharp limits upon any process of "liberalization" within Communist society. Whether one designates the Russian bureaucracy as class or caste, whether one describes the Russian social system as state capitalism or bureaucratic collectivism, is not the immediate political issue. How one anticipates the role of the bureaucracy is, since, among other things, it affects one's political attitude today. For Djilas that role will be one of tenacious defense of privilege, of "principled" opposition to democracy.

How does this square with the events of the post-Stalin period? There have been changes, and extremely significant ones. There have been the zigs and zags of the "thaw," the denunciation of the "personality cult." Yet the bureaucracy has not given up its fundamental lie for a second, either in theory or practice. It is still asserted that the present Russian state represents the near-unanimous will of the Russian people, and Khrushchev has yet to make a proposal which allows the people freely to contest this claim in any way. There has been popular pressure, to be sure, but it has manifested itself in spite of and in opposition to the state; it has wrung concessions from the rulers. In all of this, there is confirmation of Djilas' point.

Paul Sweezy's *Monthly Review* has long defended an opposing point of view: that when the conditions which produced the dictatorship—economic backwardness and international insecurity—had been overcome, the Soviet regime would, in some unspecified manner, democratize itself. Given this long-standing attitude, the re-examination of the *Monthly Review* editors is all the more revealing. In

their November, 1957 editorial they write with commendable frankness:

The conditions which produced the dictatorship *have* been overcome . . . Our theory is being put to the crucial test of practice. And so far—let us face it frankly—there is precious little evidence to confirm it.

In giving the reasons for this doubt, the *Monthly Review* editors come near to the heart of the matter. Their view of the recent facts is that

in all that has happened since Stalin's death we can find nothing to indicate that the Communist Party, or any of its competing factions, has changed in the slightest degree its view of the proper relation between the people and their leadership. That view, to put it baldly, is one of 'Papa knows best,' and there is apparently no thought that the infant Soviet people will ever grow up enough to decide for itself who knows best and hence who should make and administer the policies which determine its fate.

But then, we still have to consider why this is true. The *Monthly Review* suggests a possible explanation—"forty years is too long for a dictatorship to remain temporary"—but clearly this doesn't strike at the basic issue. In fact, at this point the commitment of Sweezy and his friends to the Russian myth, to the view that Communism in some way remains "progressive" leads to both a breakdown of analysis and an intensifying crisis of values.

It is here, by contrast, that Djilas is so relevant. In his view

The new class obtains its power, privileges, ideology and customs from one specific form of ownership—collective ownership—which the new class administers and distributes in the name of the nation and the society . . . To divest Com-

munists of their ownership rights would be to abolish them as a class.

Again the decisive point is not whether one designates the bureaucracy as a class. The main question is: no matter how one describes the bureaucracy, is its relation to its privileges and perquisites such that it will oppose any change in the social and political relationships which might endanger them? Djilas, of course, feels that this is true. And certainly his analysis is capable of dealing with the facts since Stalin's death.

II

But there is another view before us. It sees the changes since Stalin's death as part of a fundamental process, as opening up the way to democratization of Russian society. The partisans of this attitude are the Bismarckian socialists of the twentieth century: they confuse the turns and maneuvers of a ruling class with the struggle for popular freedom. And just to the extent that the nationalization of a railroad by the German Minister was socialism, so is the rehabilitation of a purge victim by the Russian assassin a step toward democracy.

The major Bismarckian socialist among us today is, of course, Isaac Deutscher. His fundamental premise is the one which the editors of the *Monthly Review* have recently seen as almost totally called into question by the facts of the post-Stalin era: "superior efficiency necessarily translates itself, albeit with a delay, into higher standards of living. These *should* lead to the softening of social tensions, the weakening of antagonisms between bureaucracy and workers, and workers and peasants, to the further lessening of terror and to the further growth of

civil liberties." (My emphasis. *New Statesman and Nation*, October 26, 1957. In the June 29 issue of the same publication, Deutscher had hailed Mao's speech, "On Contradictions," as "a most radical repudiation of Stalinism." The article appeared several weeks after Mao had unleashed the campaign against the "rightists" and two months before the *People's Daily* announced its adherence to the classical Stalinist theory that "counter-revolution" becomes more virulent as the power of the "counter-revolutionary" classes diminish.)

Deutscher, then, rejects the notion of a fundamental limit upon any bureaucratic "liberalization." In this, he is at odds with Djilas. If we can point to no decisive fact which ends the argument, the main direction of the past four years, that of turns both toward and away from a "thaw" within the unaltered framework of totalitarian rule, is of little comfort to Deutscher. For we know that a unanimous downgrading of Stalin in Stalinist fashion may well be a technique for the seizure of power on the part of a new Stalin; we know, because it has already happened, that "rights" which are granted to artists from on high can be taken away from them in a matter of days.

Ultimately, the conflict between Djilas and Deutscher (and I use their names as representative of trends of thought) comes down to the question of democracy. And by democracy, I do not mean a value term but a sociological one. Djilas understands that democracy in a statified economy is not a matter of "superstructure," of the mere form of the society, but that it is of the very social essence. For where there is nationalization of industries, the *only* means of establishing control

over the surplus product is through politics. If, as under Communism, the Party has a monopoly of political power, it also has a monopoly of social and economic power, and it is wishful thinking to assume that it will give this up voluntarily.

Here is how Djilas puts it:

The method of establishing totalitarian control, or ideological unity, may be less severe than Stalin's, but the essence is always the same. Even where industrialization is not the form or condition for establishing totalitarian control, as in Czechoslovakia and Hungary, the Communist bureaucracy is inevitably compelled to establish the same forms of authority in underdeveloped countries as those established in the Soviet Union. This does not occur simply because the Soviet Union imposed such forms on these countries as subordinates, but because it is within the very nature of Communist Parties themselves and of their ideologies to do so.

Deutscher, on the other hand, speaks of the subterranean existence of the "Revolution," even in the period of Stalin's barbarism. This is because he does not understand the social role of democracy in a stratified economy—it is because he does not realize that the political expropriation of popular power is, at the same time, the economic and social expropriation of that power. Deutscher's most persistent historical analogy is to the French Revolution and its continuation despite the Restoration. But the French Revolution was bourgeois, in which one function was that of raising a minority to the level of a ruling class. In such a situation, democracy was not indispensable to the history of the new class; the bourgeoisie could consolidate its social power even when it was temporarily deprived of political power.

But as Djilas realizes, all of these relationships are changed once there is an attempt to reach toward socialism, once, that is, the economy is stratified, Democracy is not then a squiggle of whipped cream which tops the "Revolution" some decades after the totalitarians have taken over. It is, rather, the *sine qua non*, and its absence means both that the people have been rendered helpless and that a new ruling class has taken power.

Again it must be emphasized that, in the very nature of this dispute, there is as yet no decisive fact which totally settles the argument. Yet it is revealing to compare Deutscher and Djilas on the interpretation of evidence which has become dramatic in recent times because of the Russian success with Sputnik: the character of totalitarian planning.

Here is Deutscher's view:

The techniques of planning which had first been developed awkwardly and with many costly and even tragic mistakes in the 1930's, were now brought up to a relatively high degree of efficiency, even though they were hampered by bureaucratic rigidity... The planners had at their disposal an amazingly effective 'secret weapon': the famous theorems of 'simple and expanded reproduction' which Karl Marx had developed in the second volume of *Das Kapital*.

And here is Djilas:

The Communist planned economy conceals within itself an anarchy of a special kind. In spite of the fact that it is planned, the Communist economy is perhaps the most wasteful economy in the history of human society. Such claims may seem strange, especially if one has in mind the relatively rapid development of individual branches of the economy, and of the econ-

omy as a whole... But the absence of any type of criticism, even of any type of important suggestion, inevitably leads to waste and stagnation.

On the face of it, Sputnik would seem to bear Deutscher out. But only on the face of it. For within the year, we have not only learned of the extent of Russian technology, but of its cost as well. And if we view the recent announcements in the context of Khrushchev's public admissions when he proposed to decentralize the various ministries, if we remember the astonishing picture of economic chaos painted by Gomulka and Nagy, we see that the reality of Communism is far closer to Djilas' view. On the one hand, there is the basis for a tremendous technological advance; on the other hand, this advance is achieved through dreadful human suffering and a fantastic bureaucratic inefficiency. The image which was developed in Khrushchev's program was not that of a group of planners who had the "secret weapon" from Marx's *Kapital*. On the contrary, it was a vision of inefficiency and waste, of anarchy, within the framework of bureaucratic planning and technological advance.

For Djilas, this anarchy is not a factor which can be reformed away—by Khrushchev or anyone else. Instead, it is the very essence of totalitarian planning; it is the Eisenhower Administration's penchant for using official secrecy to conceal the real facts multiplied a thousand times and elevated to a permanent and inherent feature of the system. And this condition will persist until there is a democratization—something which the bureaucracy cannot "grant" because it would mean a new class relationship and thereby destroy the basis of its power.

III

In all this, I think it is possible to locate a final, methodological opposition between Djilas and Deutscher. Deutscher, to use the language of classical Marxism, constantly separates the base and superstructure of Russian society; indeed he sees them as representing two fundamentally opposed historical tendencies. The nationalized property and the planning is the subterranean flow of "the Revolution" moving massively toward the good society. The totalitarianism is a matter of the political "superstructure," an historical detour, perhaps necessary, not desirable, yet transient. Djilas, on the other hand, sees the politics, economics and social reality of Communism interpenetrating one other—he refuses to suspend the "Revolution" in a limbo which lasted through over three decades of terror. In this, Djilas follows the analytic method of Marxism more closely than Deutscher.

But the issue is not, of course, settled by determining who is the more orthodox or better Marxist. It is rather an empirical question: which theory best accounts for the evidence we now have; which theory best prepares us to anticipate the direction of the future? And there we must return to a basic point. There is not a single shred of data which yet confirms Deutscher's theory, or even requires it as an explanation. No principle of democracy has been introduced into Russian society; the monolithic power of the state remains basically as it was under Stalin. The various changes which have taken place—and they are both undeniable and significant—are explicable in terms of Djilas' model of Russian society and do not support Deutscher's most fundamental point.

On the other hand, the sharp limits which the Russian bureaucracy has set upon the changes which have taken place (Hungary, the end of the "thaw" for the artists, the reassertion of monolithicism in the Zukhov purge) are for Djilas precisely what one should expect.

All the evidence is not in. But so far, the facts indicate that Djilas' political realism has produced a superior theory. That the editors of the *Monthly Review* have begun to become conscious of at least part of this is the *ex post facto* realization of what Djilas' theory predicted, that the fundamental basis of Russian society in the midst of transition remains the Communist monopoly of political power. In short, Russia is in a period of changes, but "democratization" from above is not one of them. And if Djilas is right, as I think he is, then we must say of Deutscher that he is ultimately a Bismarckian socialist of the twentieth century—a talented scholar, a capable writer, but a man who has mistaken the tactical maneuvers of a ruling class for the coming victory of the people.

These differences of analysis, in the discussion of which Djilas and Deutscher represent convenient labels for opposing tendencies of thought, have far more than an academic interest; nor are they confined to prediction. They vitally affect, as they also reflect, major differences of political attitude. Those who think like Deutscher tend, to one or another degree, to look for an orderly and "moderate" progress from within the ruling

groups of the Communist world; they perversely insist upon calling totalitarian societies "socialist"; they adopt toward totalitarian society a curious version of the attitude that liberals and "reformists" have taken toward capitalist society. Thus, Deutscher, while not supporting the Russian outrages in Hungary, found himself depreciating the Hungarian revolution; and in regard to Poland he can be expected to sympathize not with the "revisionists" who demand democracy but with Gomulka who tries uneasily to balance himself between the old-line Stalinists and those Polish intellectuals and workers who, in effect, have turned to democratic socialism. Djilas, by contrast, is committed—as, in my opinion, socialists must be—to looking forward to a fundamental change of social relations in the Communist world, which means, first and foremost, the destruction of the political monopoly of the Communist parties. Djilas and those who think like him stand with the people of Eastern Europe in their efforts to overthrow the tyranny of both Russian overlords and domestic party bosses. In a word, then, the difference in analysis is closely related to a profound difference in political attitudes and values.

Time will tell. We will have to reject Djilas when, and if, the Communist bureaucracy cooperates in the destruction of its own political monopoly and therefore helps to destroy its social and economic power. That, to say the least, seems to us unlikely. And Deutscher? When will he find himself overpowered by the reality?

MILLENARIANS, TOTALITARIANS AND UTOPIANS

Lewis Coser

I

Each generation sees history through lenses ground by its own experience. In these days of recoil from radical involvement it is hardly surprising that reinterpretations of just those phases of Western history in which the radical impulse was strongest have become a fashion. What Richard Hofstadter recently did for Populism and the Progressive movement in his *The Age of Reform*, Norman Cohn, an English historian, has done in his *The Pursuit of the Millennium** for the chiliastic and messianic movements which arose in Europe from the eleventh to the sixteenth century and which played so crucial a part in the peasant and artisan revolts in Germany, France, Bohemia and the Lowlands.

Hofstadter challenged the current liberal and radical interpretations of American Populism by focusing attention on the paranoid, distorted and irrational anti-Semitic elements in the motivations of its leaders and followers; Cohn now contends that those very movements which Karl Kautsky discussed under the title of *Precursors of Socialism* should really be considered precursors of modern totalitarianism. Revolutionary chiliastic movements thrive best, writes Cohn

where history is imagined as having an inherent purpose which is pre-ordained to be realized here on earth in a single, final consummation. It is such a view of history, at once teleological and cataclysmic, that has been presupposed and invoked alike by the medieval movements . . . and by the great totalitarian movements of our day.

When the existing structure of society is undermined, the members of that society lose their capacity for facing crises; once a major catastrophe strikes the lower and more vulnerable strata of the population, the way to revolutionary chiasm is opened. Such situations encourage the emergence of collective phantasies which are closely related to those paranoid phantasies which the clinician observes in individual cases:

* *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, by Norman Cohn. Essential Books. See also *The New American Right*, edited by Daniel Bell (reviewed in *DISSENT*, Winter 1956) and *The Torment of Secrecy*, by Edward A. Shils (reviewed in *DISSENT*, Fall 1956.)

The megalomaniac view of oneself as the Elect, wholly good, abominably persecuted yet assured of ultimate triumph; the attribution of gigantic and demonic powers to the adversary; the refusal to accept the ineluctable limitations and imperfections of human existence . . . these obsessions with inerrable prophecies . . .

There can be no doubt that Professor Cohn's impressive scholarship has succeeded in drawing together a tremendous amount of evidence to document his thesis. He is able to show convincingly that a great many features that mark the medieval movements of revolt also distinguish modern totalitarian doctrines. It is impossible to read his description of various anti-Semitic outbursts from the time of the crusades without drawing parallels to the horrors of the recent past; one is forcibly reminded of Stalinism when one reads in an early sixteenth century document, the *Book of Hundred Chapters*, that after all the clerics, usurers and lawyers have been hanged and burned alive, a regime of perfect virtue will be set up and that in this regime people will be encouraged to inform on their neighbors or, even better, to confess of their own accord so that perfect virtue may thus be forever maintained.

Much of what Professor Cohn has to say commands assent. And yet, as in the case of Hofstadter's book, that assent must remain partial, because his thesis is grounded in as selective a gathering of evidence as is the view which it strives to undermine. Professor Cohn's bias is perhaps best illustrated by his discussion of the mystical anarchism of the "Free Spirits." This mysticism, he asserts, differs in crucial ways from orthodox mysticism:

From the standpoint of depth-psychology it could be said that orthodox mystic and heretical adept both started their psychic venture by a profound introversion, in the course of which they lived through as adults a reactivation of the distorting phantasies of infancy. But whereas the orthodox mystic emerged from this experience—like a patient from a successful psychoanalysis—as a more integrated personality with a widened range of sympathy, the adept of the Free Spirit introjected the gigantic parental images in their most domineering, aggressive and wanton aspects and emerged as a nihilistic megalomaniac.

These *obiter dicta*, unsupported by any evidence concerning the alleged psychological health of the orthodox mystic, are indicative of Mr. Cohn's bias. He seems to reason that those who remained at peace with the Church were integrated and normal, whereas those that stood without, the heretics, were deviant and hence sick.

Generations of intellectuals since the days of the Enlightenment have written about those features of *official* church life which produced mass hysteria and mass paranoia among the orthodox believers; witness the medieval witch hunts, the Inquisition, the dancing manias of the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries. Mr. Cohn chooses to focus on the psychological afflictions of those who revolted against Church domination.

No historian can be reproached for choosing his topic of investigation in terms of his own values. But when Mr. Cohn asserts that those among the mystics who stayed within the Church were normal and "well adjusted personalities" while the heretics tended to be paranoiacs, he distorts the evidence to fit his ideological needs. Radicals have never had a monopoly on madness.

While secular intellectuals of the past focused attention on the official and institutionalized cruelties of Church and State, the new anti-ideological ideologists specialize in pointing to the cruelty and sickness of those who opposed the official powers. In as far as they make us aware of the extent to which a sense of identification with protest movements of the past has often clouded the vision of radicals and liberals, men like Hofstadter and Cohn perform a vital task. But such "de-ideological" debunking of the heroes of the radical past is also in itself an ideological enterprise; wittingly or not such authors discredit the idea of revolt by reference to the sickness of some of its practitioners.

Cohn states here and there that not all of those who revolted against the medieval domination of Church and Manor were messianic paranoiacs. His study, he says, is concerned only with those movements which had messianic features. Yet the non-specialized reader will only too easily conclude that there exists some kind of one-to-one relation between revolt and madness. As it happens, however, there were large scale heretical movements, to mention only the Waldensi and the Cathars, which were quite devoid of chiliastic features. Dislocations in the social structure, the uprooting of masses of men from their accustomed moorings, may have been a necessary condition for the emergence of chiliastic movements, but it was plainly not a sufficient condition since some of the rebellious movements had few chiliastic features—*vide* the English Peasant Revolt of the 14th century. Furthermore, not all chiliasm was militant; it often took quietistic, humanitarian and pacifist forms. The final dislocation of the medieval world which ushered in the Age of the Reformation led, as Erich Fromm and others have shown, to the emergence of Calvinism, in many respects a most cruel and inhuman creed, but one devoid of those chiliastic features to which Mr. Cohn calls attention.

Finally, is our author not just as one-sided as his predecessors when he attempts to discredit, for example, the writings of the Calabrian abbot Joachim of Flores (1145-1202), who originated the theory of the Three Ages (the Age of the Father, the Age of the Son—about to be completed—and the Age of the Spirit—which is to come soon) by linking it to the paranoid phantasies that he discusses later in the book as well as to the Third Reich. He tells us that in Joachim's interpretation "Christ stands no longer at the center of history and the Christian revelation is of only limited and temporary validity." Precisely; and that is why Joachim of Flores stands in a place of honor for all those who trace the gradual development of a secular philosophy of history

from the beginning of Joachite prophecy. Not only Comte and Marx, whom Mr. Cohn mentions, but Vico, Condorcet, Fichte, Hegel, the whole German idealistic tradition in fact, partake to some extent of Joachim's vision. By stressing Joachim's influence in but one direction, Mr. Cohn distorts the picture.

Like many medicines, Mr. Cohn's book contains ingredients that can be most salutary; but to swallow it whole would be fatal. After having concentrated on the book's pitfalls, let me now turn to some reflections about the present which have been stimulated by what, I believe, is the valuable part of this study.

II

"Chilastically minded movements are ruthless not simply in order to safeguard or further specific interests but also—and above all—in an effort to clear the way for the Millennium." Subject to the qualifications made above, this is an observation that may serve us well for understanding certain political tendencies in the modern world.* There exists indeed a correlation between modern secularized chiliastic beliefs and political cruelty. When reading the totalitarians or totalitarian liberals of our time, one is impressed by the fact that their concentration on the Kingdom Which Is To Come makes them inattentive to the horrors and inhumanity of those who will presumably bring it. The millenarian expectation thus functions as a means of detachment from one's fellows, as a defense mechanism against the impulse to pity, against involvement with the human present. The creed is inhuman precisely to the extent that identification with glorious generations as yet to be born steels the True Believer against sympathy with his fellow sufferers. One might read much of the work of Berthold Brecht as an example.

In the effort to attain a Future that Sings it becomes permissible to destroy any present obstacle. Indeed those who oppose the millennium can be denied human status altogether, for they are seen only as obstacles. They are but things or, to vary the metaphor, noxious vermin that need to be exterminated. In fact it is pleasing to God, or to History, to be among the exterminators. "At the harvest-time one must pluck the weeds out of God's vineyard" writes Thomas Muenzer, and more than 4 centuries later Mao Tse-tung echoes him in almost the same words! The medieval chiliasts were wont to compare their enemies to swine, frogs, toads, vipers—precisely the same terminology used by the Stalinists in Russia and abroad. In both cases the result is to dehumanize man, to degrade him—and thus to make him ready for the executioner. One cannot feel a sense of brotherhood with reptiles; hence there is no place for pity.** The striving toward the Liberation of Mankind leads to the death of emotion.

* For an understanding of secularized messianism J. L. Talmeri's *The Origin of Totalitarian Democracy*, Boston, 1954, is essential.

** One may note that modern millenarians go one step further than their predecessors; they may regard men not so much as "things" as "sub-men" (Untermenschen). A "sub-man" is worse than a thing; a thing is neutral, you feel no contempt for it.

The modern millenarian is in search of "a final solution." He strives for total liberation from those social and existential conditions which have in the past hampered and degraded man. He seeks to release man from the human condition, but in the pursuit of this goal he is all too ready to go on a rampage of destructive and nihilistic violence.

From the twelfth century on we meet the heretical sects of the Free Spirits who stress, as Professor Cohn informs us, that for the "subtle in spirit" sexual intercourse can under no circumstance be objectionable, that in fact total promiscuity is most pleasing to God. Writes the 17th century "Ranter" Laurence Clarkson "till acted that so-called sin, thou art not delivered from the power of sin." The Bohemian Adamites, a sect which participated in the Bohemian uprising of the Taborites but were later exterminated by Zizka, the leader of the uprising, declared that the chaste were unworthy of entering their messianic heaven and that salvation lay only in a return to Adam's nakedness and total promiscuity. Here again we note interesting parallels between certain modern forms of millenarianism and doctrines of "total sexual liberation" in which the common denominator is a nihilistic striving for total release from the bonds of the human condition. Total power in the millennium is in subtle ways connected with total potency. The urge to violence is connected with the urge to violate. A misunderstood or misinterpreted Freud, more commonly perhaps a Reichian phantasy, may underlie such strivings, but the roots of this tendency go deeper. Often, of course, this leads only to private and rather innocuous attempts to reach solutions to life's problems through copulation, but at times in the past, and this gives food for thought, such private phantasies were acted out on the public scene. The Adamites claimed not only to return to the state of innocence of Adam and Eve before the Fall, they also regarded themselves as avenging angels wielding the sword until the unclean had been cut down.

III

Secularized millenarianism has informed most important parts of the modern radical tradition. To the extent that it prevailed, it desensitized the radical. If the goal was everything, then the means were too easily regarded as nothing. Callousness and insensitivity in interpersonal relations went together with the view that "the revolution is just around the corner." (I still remember the young Communist who a few years ago told me in dead earnest: "One doesn't give a dime to a beggar, one gives him the *Daily Worker*.")

One cannot but feel that those who talked of the millennium in which men would achieve a "painless gratification of all needs" were frequently led to an oblique justification of iniquities in the present—for example, Russia's action in Hungary. How dared those Hungarians raise obstacles to the fated course of History? Had they refrained from their foolish actions the millennium might have been reached a few years earlier, since industrialization in Russia could then have been

advanced more rapidly. How could the Hungarians fail to see that "total abundance in the future" justifies every privation in the present? How deplorable that they tried to unmask the "ruse of reason."

If every move in this alienated world is an alienated move, then everything goes. There remains no standard of moral discrimination, only a tense expectation together with a devaluation of the moral significance of present acts. Sometimes there follows an even more remarkable type of reasoning: since the world is corrupt and it is impossible to resist its corruption short of the millennium, one might as well relax and enjoy it...

I have been arguing against millenarianism in radical politics, but not arguing against Utopias. On the contrary, the construction of pictures or models of what the good society could be like should today be among the main concerns of radicals. How is one to attack the inhuman features of present society, if not by keeping before one's eyes images of a more humane society? How is one to criticize the shortcomings of the present if not by reference to a working model of the future?

But there is a crucial difference between Utopian thinking as here understood and millenarian thinking. Such Utopian thinking does not rely on the automatic working of the Laws of History, Logos or God. The Utopian constructs images of the good society, he believes that this society can be attained, but his commitment does not depend on knowing beforehand that it will in fact ever be attained. These images serve as a guide to present conduct and as an incentive for action. The Utopian radical does not strive for "total liberation." His is not the *hubris* of claiming to know the future, but only the humble awareness that his conduct in the here and now is a determinant of the future.

If there is no "final solution," there only remains the never ending quest for a better solution. In fact there remains only an asymptotic reaching for an ideal, the "full realization" of which might always recede into the future just as we seem to approach it. In science the progressive increase in our knowledge implies at the same time the increase of the not-yet-known; and so it may be in social life. The perfectibility of man is an unending enterprise.

Such an approach may not have much glamour; it limits expectations; it restrains the exuberance of the political imagination. Yet who would dare to say that the past struggles of mankind which failed to attain "total goals" were therefore in vain? There is a sense in which all human strivings must remain only partly gratified: such is the human condition, the tragedy and irony of history. There is much in man and in history that is fortuitous and capricious, human actions have but too often unanticipated consequences, and yet there is much that reasonable men can do in concert to make this a better world. For such enterprises men need a maximum of rational awareness, and they need therefore to reject the secularized theodicies of the modern millenarians.

Reflections on Hipsterism

1) Jean Malaquais

Once upon a time there was a myth named *le prolétariat*. Though obviously a male, the myth was believed to be pregnant with child—a well conformed socialistic baby true to the Scriptures. Baby being long overdue, the congregation of the faithful first became skeptical, then frankly disgusted. Feeling cheated, never allowing that they may have misread the Book, they repudiated *le prolétariat*, sued for divorce, and being an idealistically inclined flock, started to shop around for a better, less sterile myth. Great schisms followed, yet few of the flock turned cynical. Quite the contrary. Prompted by their thirst for eternal values, many made dangerous inroads into heretofore uncharted lands. There, as in a secret Eden happily rediscovered, amazingly new and refreshing reasons to live awaited the bold myth hunter: Liberalism, Democracy, Free World, Peace, Stop-the-AH-Experiments, etc., and—honor to whom honor is due—the long neglected bastard-brother of *le prolétariat*: marijuana soaked Hip.

That Hip found in Norman Mailer its most outstanding and original theologian (I don't say apologist), seems quite clear in the light of his essay [DISSENT, Summer 1957]. He may be correct in stating that Hip and psychopathology follow two parallel paths, but he has still to persuade this reader that the American Negro bohemian and his white imitator embody a special brand of the human species. Starting with the fact that the Negro's status within the American community is a marginal one, Mailer is not content to allow him his particular or characteristic psychological bent; he bestows upon him a Messianic mission.

He seems to forget that the American hipster has his counterparts and equivalents in countries with no Negro population: Sweden, England, Russia, Poland, France, to name only a few places. The Swedish youth runs properly amok. The British Teddy, the Russian *besprizornyyé*, the Polish hooligans, the French pseudo-existentialist fauna, don't behave differently toward life than the hipster. All are the product of an identical social phenomenon prevailing in highly industrialized and more or less paternalistically ruled countries: extreme inner insecurity dipped in a State-sponsored "welfare" at the price of a terrific loss to the individual's self. That's one reason why, as a rule, they react on the level of a purely personal idea of "recovery"—but from what and toward what none of them really knows.

When Mailer says of the hipster that he has "converted his unconscious experience into much conscious knowledge," he may speak of the hipster's

knowledge in a very narrow practical way, as for instance knowledge on how to survive momentarily in a back alley; but he is mistaken if he takes it for more than it is: an instinctive and empirical know-how. The remarkable thing about hipsters of all kinds and variety (and they vary indeed in many aspects) is that, except for a case or two in a generation, as a body they are sooner or later swallowed up by the most conforming routine ever.

Hip is but another name for lumpen, and lumpen make excellent conformists and the best of potential hangmen for "order's" sake. Even before they fall into rank and file, rather than raping and murdering they blabber of rape and murder; they dream of rape and murder in idiotic clichés, vicariously, with a hand from the tabloids and other such literature. Yet if a handful among the tens of thousands, as Mailer numbers them, do go through rape and murder, it is mostly by accident, by a tragic mistake, almost never by deliberate clear choice, and then only once, for they are ambushed as soon as they have zipped up their pants.

One other reason why lumpen of all kind are but a myth in terms of social action, except possibly a small home-made pogrom with the implicit or explicit blessing of State and municipality, is that they do not form any coherent social body. Negro shopkeepers and white shopkeepers, should their shops be endangered, would dismiss all color lines and slaughter hand in hand Negro and white lumpen. There is more real solidarity (class solidarity) between white and Negro "law abiding citizens" than between people of "Caucasian" or "African" complexion.

MOREOVER, there is hardly a hipster alive who doesn't long to conform (like his extreme representative, the psychopath, he is always a case of a frustrated conformist), and there is hardly a conformist alive, white or Negro, who doesn't long to rape and murder (like his extreme representative, the pulpit moralist, he is always a case of a frustrated rebel). The difference is that the conformist hardly ever becomes a lumpen, that the lumpen almost always becomes a conformist (all exceptions granted). In turn, the difference is due to the only real relationship in modern society: property relationship. For the conformist to become a lumpen means to give up his actual or virtual property, which he cannot do by free choice; for the lumpen to become a conformist means to acquire property, which he always wills by free choice—however strong his overt denial. (As a matter of fact, lumpen is a way of making a living.)

On the other hand, the rebel who outgrew the romantic stage of his rebellion, who knows himself to be a grown up rebel—which is quite different from being a "radical," for after all a McCarthy too was a "radical"—knows also that *he conforms*, that he moves within the bonds of social and cultural institutions whose weight he cannot shake off in his private way, but who keeps within his conformity a lucid mind and a clear heart as to what conforming and what rebellion mean in terms not of his subjective immediate I, but in terms of man as such, of man as a social creature. To make an image: the lumpen yells sh . . . to the cop on the street-corner and feels purged,

the conformist lifts his cap to the same cop and feels reassured in his pants, the grown up rebel ignores the cop (though he may summon his help in an emergency) and applies his energy to fell the tree that breeds cops, conformists and lumpen.

The amusing thing is that one can read into Mailer's essay precisely the proposition that the hipster is nothing but a conformist in reverse. "If," says Hip in Mailer's words, "if the fate of 20th century man is to live with death . . . why then the only life-giving answer is to accept the terms of death, to live with death as immediate danger, to divorce oneself from society," etc. Now if man's fate is to live with death, how does the hipster manage to divorce himself from society since he does accept "the terms of death"? If the terms are death, and if he accepts the terms—nay, if he so to speak naturalizes the terms generally prevailing for his private use, why he conforms nice and clean, he is at the avant-garde of conformity.

"Death you want?" says Hip to society. "Good, death there'll be!" And there he goes, the small entrepreneur in death competing with industrial death. One Mr. Verdoux once made a superb parody of our death-bent hipster. But no. Hip, says Mailer truly, Hip wants love, wants peace in a nice kitchenette with a white apron around his girl's waist. All the "mysticism," all the "dialectical conception of existence" Mailer so generously bestows upon Hip is, as far as I am concerned, a gorgeous flower of Mailer's romantic idealism.

Paris

September 4, 1957

Norman Mailer replies:

In his search for a sexual life which will suit his orgiastic needs, the hipster willy-nilly attacks conventional sexual morality, and to some degree succeeds in disturbing the balance. If capitalist society is grounded upon property relations, these relations are wed to monogamy, family, and the sexual strictures which maintain them. It is yet to be established that sexual life can be promiscuously altered without affecting the psychic real estate of capitalism. Since Malaquais seems to be indirectly arguing the affirmative, I would suggest that there are obstructions to his proof which the poetic excellences of his style cannot storm by metaphor.

Man is a flux of possibilities and energies long before and perhaps long after he is a manipulator of land, properties, and productions. A civilization from now, the vast chapter of Western expansion which was built on property and such inhuman abstractions of human energy as money, credit, and surplus value, may be seen as an ice-age of cruel and brutally slow liberations of productive, purposive, creative and sexual energies which the contradictions of inequity and exploitation congealed not only into the working habits of men, elaborated not only into the institutional hypocrisies of society, but indeed drove as cancerous ambivalences and frustrations into the texture of being itself.

The growth of human consciousness in this century demanded—for its expanding vitality—that a revolution be made, that a mankind be liberated, and since the attempt failed in its frontal revolutionary attack, failed precisely

to change the exploitative character of our productive relations, it may well be that the rise of the hipster represents the first wind of a second revolution in this century, moving not forward toward action and more rational equitable distribution, but backward toward being and the secrets of human energy, not forward to the collectivity which was totalitarian in the proof but backward to the nihilism of creative adventurers, a revolution admittedly impossible to conceive even in its outlines, for unlike that first revolution which was conscious, Faustian, and vain, enacted in the name of the proletariat but more likely an expression of the scientific narcissism we inherited from the nineteenth century, a revolution motivated by the rational mania that consciousness could stifle instinct and marshal it into productive formations, the second revolution, if it is to come, would come indeed as antithesis to the "Great Experiment":—its desire would be to turn materialism on its head, have consciousness subjugated to instinct. The hipster, rebel cell in our social body, lives out, acts out, follows the close call of his instinct as far as he dares, and so points to possibilities and consequences in what have hitherto been chartless jungles of moral nihilism. The essence of his expression, his faith if you will, is that the real desire to make a better world exists at the heart of our instinct, (that instinctual vision of a human epic which gave birth to consciousness itself) that man is therefore roughly more good than evil, that beneath his violence there is finally love and the nuances of justice, and that the removal therefore of all social restraints while it would open us to an era of incomparable individual violence would still spare us the collective violence of rational totalitarian liquidations (which we must accept was grossly a psychic index of the buried, voiceless, and ineradicable violences of whole nations of people), and would—and here is the difference—by expending the violence directly open the possibility of working with that human creativity which is violence's opposite.

But of course this may be no more than the sword dance of my "romantic idealism." Immediately, the charge by Malaquais is that the hipster is our old black sheep, our discontented nephew of the proletariat, the impotent lumpen no more than a thousand dollars away from kissing the penny-calloused hands of the *petit-bourgeoisie*. I wonder. Is it so very lumpen to be able to influence American culture? The mass audience may turn in for the night to the chest-out, stomach-in, pinch-buttocks of the Star Spangled Banner, with perhaps a five minute sermonette to speed them to churchly sleep, but their waking hours were vibrated by that now *déclassé* (so fast does it change) Holy Shaker, that ex-apostle of small-town Southern orgasm, Elvis Presley.

MALAUQUAIS SAYS the hipster has his opposite number in the British Teddy, the *besprizornyé* (still untamed?—how unlumpen!) the Polish hooligans, the French existentialists, all Hip, and not a drop of Negro blood in a thousand of their black masses. But Malaquais would be hard-put to find the taint of Hip without the blood of jazz. The Negro's experience appears to be the most universal communication of the West, and the authority of their tortured senses may indeed be passing by the musical states of their artistic expression,

without language, without conscious communication, into the no doubt equally tortured senses of the wild sensitive spawn of two vast wars. But to Malaquais the lumpen is the lumpen. If Marx did not find it necessary to take them seriously, how dare we?

I wonder, however, if it would not be more "Marxist" to recognize that the superstructure of society has attained vast autonomies outside productive relations, psychological undercurrents which often clash with material economic realities—as, for example, the swoop of the stockmarket in response to the Sputnik. There may even be ineradicable conflicts of interest between the superstructure and the base of productive relations. At the least, is it not reasonable to assume that society has reached a point of such complexity, such "organismishness" that it is capable of adapting itself to avoid economic crisis by unwillingly (owing to the contradictions of mass manipulation) communicating mass psychological crises via the mass communications.

The contemporary contradictions from which America has been suffering (given the virtually self-regulating economic valves of war finance) have been almost insupportable psychological contradictions, virtually perfect Orwellian ambivalences—(War is Peace, Love is Hate, Ignorance is Knowledge); if these psychic contradictions should eventually introduce an apathy sufficient to turn our country back into economic contradictions and economic depression, which is indeed far from impossible, it will not mean that the process was a simple dialectic whose breath moved only through the circuits of productive relations. What one may fumble toward is a dialectic which can bridge the material and the ideal—which can infuse material notions of energy into that philosophical country of the ideal (read: the individual unconscious) which psychoanalysis now occupies with a middle-class mechanistic *weltanschauung*. If we socialists, radicals, anarchists, rebels, nihilists, and dissenters are to become more than the dried twigs of an old family tree, the shabby genteel clerks who end the line of a warrior family, it can at least be recognized that until the radical bridge from Marx to Freud is built, and our view of man embraces more facts, contradictions, and illuminations than any conservative view, and stares into such terrifying alternatives as totalitarianism or barbarism, we are doing no more than scolding ourselves, and ignoring that revolutionary indictment which every human alive can respond to in some part of himself: that an unjust society wreaks cruel if subtle imprisonments and destructions of personal energy, wreaks them not only upon an individual class or race, but upon the being of each of us. For, ultimately, unjust societies must, out of the nature of their contradictions, stifle the best part of each creativity, and so starve into neglect and atrophy that future we hear raging to be born.

2) Ned Polsky

Although Norman Mailer, in "The White Negro," shows ample awareness of some drawbacks of hipster life, others he romanticizes away or ignores. Mailer is right in seeing the hipsters as the only significant new group of rebels in America. He is also right to recognize the new

Bohemia, extend it his "essential sympathy," and where he cannot find much of merit, perhaps yet encourage it by praising with faint damns. But it is equally legitimate and desirable to recognize that there are qualitative differences among Bohemias and that the current Bohemia is greatly inferior to its predecessors of at least the past four decades.

I

The new Bohemia's inferiority shows up clearly in its lack of intellectual content. Most hipsters scarcely read at all, not because they can't (nearly all of them have finished high school, and a surprising number of the whites have attended our better universities) but because they won't. The closest thing to an intellectual discussion is their chatter about the pseudo-profundities of contemporary jazz; they don't even know—worse, don't want to know—that the things they praise were achieved by art-music composers years ago. As for the few who can be said to read with any regularity: they turn their backs not only on the horrors but the grandeurs of the past, restrict their horizon to contemporary literature, and from this area select what is in large part tripe—a compound of Rexroth and Rimbaud, Henry Miller and *Mad Comics*, Sartre and science fiction, jazz magazines and jerkoff magazines.

Their own literary productions are few, and what there are of them—with the exception of some poems by Robert Duncan and parts of his unpublished play, *Faust Foutu*—have almost no literary merit whatever. (Buy *Evergreen Review* No. 2 and back issues of *Origin* and see for yourself.) The reason is not far to seek: even if we grant Mailer's dubious claim that the American existentialists feel their existentialism more than the French do, it is still true that for art something more is required than the raw recital of raw emotion. Thus the American hipsters' writings cannot begin to compare with the work of the arch-hipsters of modern European literature, Celine and Genet, to say nothing of any number of non-hipsters.

II

Hipster hedonism takes many forms. Some hipster groups, for example, have everything to do with motorcycles, whereas others have nothing to do with them. But not significant in any of these groups, Mailer to the contrary, is a sexual revolution. Of course hipsters are willing to try a variety of partners and positions, have no objection to inter-racial intercourse, etc.—but this is merely to say that they are "liberated" in the superficial ways that many "liberals" are. For all its probings of hipster pathology, Mailer's rhetoric covers up the fact that hipsters are not only more "psychologically" crippled than most people but sexually likewise—that they are not sexually free and have no chance to become so, and that this means they are not actual or potential sexual revolutionaries in the profound sense that Mailer is talking about. Two examples: many male hipsters (if I am to believe the testimony of several hip men and women) are extremely sadistic in their sexual relationships, and many others are so narcissistic that inevitably their orgasms are premature and puny. No amount of plain or fancy screwing is going to change this. When Mailer glamorizes the hipsters' "search after the good orgasm" he is

simply accepting at face value their rationalization for what is in truth a pathetic, driven sex life in which the same failures are repeated again and again. On this matter as on others, Mailer confuses the life of action with the life of acting out.

I imagine that Mailer really knows all this but that he cannot state it baldly because it would then be obvious that "bad orgasm" is one habit the hipster will never kick without the "dreary alternative" of psychoanalysis. Of course now that psychoanalysis has become a respectable part of psychiatry and the old-style European analysts, who were mostly rebels by definition, are being rapidly replaced by bourgeois young American M.D.'s, it is undeniable that the patient runs a much greater risk of encountering the analyst for whom "cure" necessarily includes "adjustment" to the present social structure. And not a few pioneer analysts now devote all their energies to making rich men's children content with their lot in life. But it is equally undeniable that psychoanalysis—whatever the brand—still provides greater sexual benefits than does the dreary alternative that Mailer glorifies. Psychoanalysis has been domesticated but not castrated.

III

The world of the hipster is commonly held to break down racial barriers, and indeed it does. If we accept the usual ultimate test (and Mailer's)—whether whites and Negroes sleep together—hipsters undoubtedly meet it much more often than squares do. Nevertheless there is a built-in barrier to full acceptance of black hipsters by white ones (and to a lesser extent vice versa), which stems from the fact that hipsters are marginal in a very special way.

The white Negro, as Mailer aptly calls him, is of course a marginal man. He puts down the white world from which he came. And he can never fully make it in, or be accepted by, the Negro world; so with rare exceptions (notably Mezz Mezzrow) he doesn't even try to live within the Negro community, and if he does he is put down by Negroes a lot. He exists, then, between the two worlds, where he meets his obverse: the Negro hipster, who puts down the Negro community at large (one reason, though not the main one, being that most Negroes are also squares, Mailer's stereotype of the Negro notwithstanding) and can never fully make it in the white world.

The first thing to notice about these marginal men—white or black—is that they are not the utterly isolated, atomized individuals whom sociologists assume all marginal men to be. They come together and create a little world of their own which elaborates its own worldview, code of behavior, institutions, argot, and so on. They create what to sociologists is a contradiction in terms: a subculture of marginal men.*

* A good index of the subculture's strength is provided by that most pervasive of hipster activities, marijuana-smoking and its attendant exploration of exotic states of consciousness, for the reactions of one under the influence of marijuana are determined not nearly so much by his individual psychology or physiology as by subcultural norms. For a related point of view, and much concrete evidence, cf. Howard S. Becker, "On Becoming a Marijuana Smoker," *American Journal of Sociology*, LIX (November 1953), pp. 235-242.

Now, the inner tragedy of the hipster subculture is this: the white member is attracted to the Negro member because of the latter's Negro-ness, whereas the Negro—and this Mailer ignores—is attracted to the white precisely because of his whiteness. Although the inter-racial groups which constitute the hipster subculture are "primary" groups in sociological terms, since in them whites and Negroes meet in "intimate, face-to-face relationships," this does not automatically imply the deepest kind of social bond; sociological theory is too gross at this point because it neglects the fact that "face to face" occasionally means, among other things, "looking in opposite directions." Many a time I have heard white hipsters, when no Negro members were present, put down one of the absent Negroes with "The trouble with X is that he's too fay-oriented," or "Y is a drag; all he's interested in is laying white chicks." And I'd bet my bottom dollar that Negro hipsters, among themselves, often put down the whites with something like "Man, those fay cats are pretty cool and don't want us to be Uncle Toms, but they still want us to be spooks. They don't really dig us as people; they just dig us for our music and our pot." Which is true. Even in the world of the hipster the Negro remains essentially what Ralph Ellison called him—an invisible man. The white Negro accepts the real Negro not as a human being in his totality, but as the bringer of a highly specified and restricted "cultural dowry," to use Mailer's phrase. In so doing he creates an inverted form of keeping the nigger in his place.

Norman Mailer replies:

As a cool critical view of the affectations, vanities, and hypocrisies of the hipster, I have little quarrel with Ned Polsky's remarks. They were written with a keen eye. But I believe he overrides a most complex question when he declares that many male hipsters have orgasms premature and puny. Since he can hardly have had the requisite personal experience—"Uncle," said a bisexual Negro to me once, "I couldn't have more charge for that chick if I'd gone down on a platoon of Marines,"—I wonder if Polsky isn't really just passing on a tyrannical assumption which is one of the cement blocks of the Square throne of psychoanalysis.

In the Western sexual literature with which I am familiar, classical, technical, and pornographic, I can remember—with the harsh radical exception of Wilhelm Reich—almost no incisive discussion of male orgasm. The very notion of "good orgasm" (which indeed I used superficially in *The White Negro*, DISSENT, Summer '57) betrays the lack of examination we bring to it, for it assumes there are two domains, good orgasm and bad, each clearly set apart by a defense line of psychic dragon teeth. But the Hip argument, if one is to dredge it forth, would claim that even in an orgasm which is *the most* there is always the vision of an outer wider wilder orgasm which is even more *with it*. The nature of orgasm is a spectrum, perhaps an infinite spectrum, perhaps intimately dialectical: in the worst of orgasm there are nips of pleasure, in the best of orgasms some mannered containments denying pleas-

ure beyond high pleasure, restraining the rarer liberations of energy for the next day.

I am sure that the average psychoanalyst would now say, "The fact that the advocate of this thesis wants more of orgasm, is an indication of dissatisfaction with his narcissistic involvements. The adjusted social person knows better than to worry about his orgasm. It has been improved by psychoanalytical therapy." Of course one could walk through a mile of analysand-type persons to find one who really believed that his orgasm had been sexually improved.

But to argue this way is to stalk one's opponent about a circle, each a safe diameter apart. Finally, one cannot enter another being's orgasm and measure its scope, (especially since many people's frustrated theatrical talents are brought resolutely to bed), one can only guess from the spectrum of one's own what the possibilities may be for others. And the line I would prefer to engage is to call into account the psychoanalyst's self-interest in believing that almost all sexual rebels are sick sexually. Indeed, he is right. But almost everyone is sick sexually in more or less degree, and so the indictment by the psychoanalyst should come forth no more maternally than to claim: better you should be sick as a Square than sick as a Hip.

Still the impolite question remains to be asked: does the direct experience of the analyst's own life prepare him to judge the inner states of Hip? Sedentary, middleclass, in fief to fifteen years of training, living among the absurd magpie scrutinies of wife, children, colleagues, patients, and hostile strangers, most analysts are obliged to be more proper than proper, and their characters, impulses and value judgments become shaped to satisfy the social necessities of their work. The social necessities of their work? The analyst is Gibraltar in a pathless middle-class sea, his guiding torch is lit by money, his triumphs are invariably with plain and miserable patients, squashed too early by life, ruined permanently for pleasure, and so burgeoning under the stern authority and human comfort that an expensive person listens to them for two and a half hours a week. But the analyst, this middleclass and usually pampered son, is he the one to make the imaginative journey into the tortured marijuana-racked mind and genitalia of a hipster daring to live on the edge of the most dangerous of the Negro worlds? Or is it not finally a matter of courage, courage not necessarily nor uniquely before violence, but courage to accept telling blows to the ego? For what would the analyst do, and what would become of his tidy, narrow, other-directed little world if he were to discover, and may God help him, that the hipster way out by the lip of danger, may conceivably know more of the savor and swing in the damn dialectic of the orgasm than he, the doctor, the educated ball-shrinker who diagnoses all joys not his own as too puny.

BOOKS

Our Best Journalist

THE MEMOIRS OF A REVOLUTIONIST, by Dwight Macdonald.
Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, \$4.75.

This book, as a book, doesn't add much to the wealth of nations. It is foolishly inconsistent, not often thought-provoking, not informative (except perhaps to the young who have never heard of these goings-on), and hardly even entertaining. Yet most of the pieces collected here were—I do not mean “seemed”—very good when they appeared. There is no paradox; Dwight is an excellent journalist—I am not well-informed, but I can't think of any better. He thinks with his typewriter about the current material and in the mêlée of opinions of the readers he hopes to reach. He raises that kind of conversation to a better level, with broader perspective, better words; he gives information they would have overlooked. He never fails to be fair to the immediate facts and at least decent in his sentiments. He is never revolting and not very often stupid. He is fearless and independent. Reflect a moment and make comparisons among the journalists and you will see how excellent is Dwight. Such journalists are indispensable in our conversation-groups; and and I am not especially depressed to find him, who started with Luce, now with *The New Yorker*; for Dwight's job or connection-tenure averages, let

us say, five years, which is not above par for an honest man who is adaptable and really aims to please.

But of course such thinking with the typewriter, instead of the head, heart, and hand, cannot rise above its source in the headlines and the mixture of polemical opinions. Dwight says he is “unable to write a book in cold blood,” implying, I think, both that he needs the heat of involvement and that there is something clammy about the development of a thesis in “isolation.” I am not so sure, however, that he can write a book at all. His involvement is that of a welcome kibitzer rather than of a man determined to a goal of action or truth; and he seems to have no experience of the passion of the intellect, of learning and adding to learning, of catching a definition and exhausting the consequences, of affirming a conclusion because it follows. Whence would he get the plot, the inner motion, of a book? Or how could he become absorbed enough to write a book? As a journalist-critic, coping with opinions and headline-facts his organization of the material is clear and telling, but it reveals nothing of the essence of the subject; whereas the organization of a book is the essence

of the subject.

Then let me here, since we have before us such a remarkably fine specimen, look for a few properties of the Journalist. In the nature of the case, since I am writing in cold blood, all my sentences will seem cold-blooded. I am looking at something reproduced in a book which had its proper life for us as we read on the run. Thus, I say this book is not informative; it is not; yet the pieces, in their matrix of heated talk, gave new material. This book is not entertaining (although it is not dull); yet once the pieces were sprightly. Not thought-provoking, yet the pieces improved the level of discussion. I still think that *Politics* was the best magazine in my adult memory; and *Partisan Review* was readable when Dwight Macdonald was an editor.

II

A journalist has no memory. Dwight once told me, but he will not remember, that he couldn't remember anything more than three months back—the period, I guess, for researching an assignment and thinking it up with one's typewriter. The advantage of having no memory is that one accumulates no experience, one doesn't learn anything, and therefore can journalistically confront every new situation with the same fresh attitude, consulting the morgue for background data. To quote our author, who has just been describing how one of his intellectual adventures petered out, "The prodigal son must have found home life, once the fatted calf was eaten, as boring as ever"; that is, he didn't learn anything after all. Now this book is oddly called *Memoirs*. (What shall we say of that title, *The Me-*

moirs of a Revolutionist, when Dwight doesn't even have a memory! I take it that the second part of the title is meant in fun.) Of course the book is not memoirs, but a collection of old pieces of journalism. And still more strikingly, the autobiographical introductory essay was mainly put together (this is my hunch) by consulting his scrapbook of old memoranda and articles, arranging them chronologically, and drawing from them a fine new—though already dated—article about the current state of the "intellectuals, in which conversation-group he classes himself. The tone of the article is unchanged, perhaps a little tired (*plus c'est la même chose, plus ça change.*) The gist is that intellectuals are now a-political. His understanding of the term "politics" does not seem to have grown with experience; one must conclude that there was no experience. But subjectively, is this the way in which a man remembers his life? Only the last sentence betrays an emotion:

In recent years I have devoted most of my time to *The New Yorker*, where I have been able to write the kind of social-cultural reportage and analysis that now interests me more than political writing. This is an anticlimactic end to these memoirs of a revolutionist, but there it is, and there I am.

A journalist is not encumbered with learning, with history, or classics or science. This qualification is essential, because it is impossible to be learned in these ways without succumbing to having a perspective on the events that everybody is discussing. An historian or humanist finds that his present is not the other people's present, and a scientist is not even seeing what the other people see. (In this respect journalism is like television;

it is with jeopardy that a young fellow has learned to know and love great works of art, for this gives him scruples and makes him inept.) A critical journalist must take the headlines and the public responses to them as serious, as if these were the important events of the era, whatever interpretation he may then go on to make. Now Dwight wears his ignorance gracefully. He is not encumbered by the long view; he does not have X-ray eyes; his authors—excepting always Herzen—are those whom the right people are currently quoting, and he is intelligent and grasps their topical relevance quickly and accurately. It is only rarely that he makes your hair stand on end with remarks like “The Greeks . . . found the State never worthy of a man’s respect,” or “The Marxist has a richer intellectual tradition than the pacifist,” or “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity . . . these liberal values.” (What the devil did they use to teach at Phillips Exeter and Yale?) But most often he eschews such flyers, they are mere decoration.

(Let me say that in the analysis of one kind of phenomenon Dwight seems to me to display much more scientific acumen: the squeeze-play in his account of the Warsaw uprising or divide-and-rule in his account of Badoglio and De Gaulle. Why this is so I am not prepared to explain.)

The next property of a journalist I find less amiable, but no doubt it is equally essential and entailed in the others. A journalist smugly assumes that his conversation-group comprises all the thinking or the right-feeling people that there are; the others are either *hoi polloi* or odd-balls. It is this unified group that gives him both his material and his tone. Thus,

Dwight says, “All our scripts were Marxian,” “Then we believed in revolution and now we don’t,” “The coming war was our trump card,” etc. Who? By “we” he explicitly means all intellectuals of a radical bent, all those who “were thinking at all”; that is, he has ruled out from possible relevance the sentiments not only of the majority but of those who were a good deal wiser than Dwight and were not making the same errors, e.g. the libertarians and the philosophic conservatives, two often-meeting and by no means incompatible extremes. But such fellows (take Croce, a philosophic “liberal”), grounded more solidly in the nature of things and therefore less deluded by *maya*, could make little stir nor have much exciting to say in the world of intellectual journalism; and it is by a sure instinct that a good journalist helps them not to exist. The beautiful fellowship of the world of journalists is that those who have in one tendency been discredited by events, find themselves together on the masthead in a new tendency; and is it possible that they carry their readers with them?

(This smug conceit of being in the know-group, however, must not be confused with the harmless vanity that belongs to Dwight as a very fine and confident writer and craftsman. His personal vanity even somewhat alleviates his group-conceit, although it makes him somewhat embarrassingly, though justifiably, enthusiastic for his own formulations.)

But let me dwell a moment on an example of excluding something—a mass-sentiment—because it is not what “we” feel is proper. Dwight quotes *in extenso* General Patton’s Farewell Speech, and he calls it “affected . . .

and empty . . . and a reflection of what war-making has done to the personality of Patton." (Aug. 1945) The speech is not affected and empty and in its origin has nothing to do with war-making. Except for the first paragraph, which is cold, the speech consists of sentiments common in any bar in America, among those warding off the dread of emasculation; there are the same reaction-formations, displacements, prejudices, and scientific fantasies. They have been carefully chosen and skilfully organized to energize identification with the leader, the force that has "saved" them from themselves, that is from the sensible impulse to run away.

Now this line of thinking is not inaccessible to Dwight, for in another context ("Notes on the Psychology of Killing," Sept. 1944) he had quoted and explored these very observations, saying, "One tends to overlook them and therefore to expect more resistance to the process of war from soldiers than actually takes place." How to explain it? Except that eleven months is longer than a three-month memory-span can cope with.

Good; by October 1945, discussing war-making itself, Dwight allows himself the sentence: "Extend civilian values throughout the armed forces." What an astonishingly inhuman proposition! One would think Dwight had never thought about war and fighting. Even old Kant, who was a useful friend to peace on earth, listed soldiers in battle as one of the few things that are sublime; and William James saw that the problem was to find a moral equivalent. Freud's fear and wonder, as he went deeper in the dreams and speculated about the carnage around him, made him postu-

late a death-wish. *Et cetera, et cetera.* The case is that we here have a terrible problem that nobody knows how to solve, that must yet be subjected to endless analysis, that must be alleviated piecemeal. It is a bad subject for journalism. For the journalist must have an opinion, an editorial line; the readers want to know what their right feeling is this quarter.

III

I seem to be saying, what is not new-sy, that a journalist is not an historian, not a scientist, not a philosopher, not a statesman; obviously one could extend the list. Dwight is one of our best journalists, but what is a journalist? A journalist practices what the ancients used to call a Universal Art, one that has no proper subject matter. Therefore the worst fate that could befall a journalist is to have his pieces collected, for how, on what principle, will they hang together? Each one is devoted to organizing the opinions of an occasion sufficient for the occasion, but not likely grounded in anything underlying. Dwight is a literate journalist who employs a wide range of concepts, and a committed journalist who expresses many feelings, from comedy to indignation. But the concepts have no independent life and growth—they have no scientific or practical value. Thus in one piece he is anti-political; in another irate at the de-politicalizing of the war; in another he talks of a neo-conservatism. In many pieces the analysis is Marxian, yet in others he totally rejects Marxian analysis without giving an alternative analysis. Nothing adds up. The feelings, correspondingly, do not ring as if having them makes any difference to the man.

All the same, Dwight is a fine writer and that is because he is a very personal, *sui generis*, kind of journalist. His content conveys not much, but his manner conveys always himself. (I am reminded of Ruskin's complaint: "I show men their plain duty and they reply that my style is charming." But again, there it is.) He has animal spirits; he is outgoing; he is intelligent, scrupulous, and unusually free from spite; he is sensitive and has decent, livable Anglo-Saxon prejudices; he is honest; he is not afraid to speak his piece. I hope sometime to have the occasion to review one of his pieces when it is hot, and I am hot, and to show how good it is.

PAUL GOODMAN

BOOKS RECEIVED

YEARBOOK OF THE INTERNATIONAL FREE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT, 1957-1958. Maxwell and Co. Ltd. London, W1. 624 pp. £5.50.—Published under the auspices of the ICTFU by the Lincoln-Prager International Yearbook Publishing Company and distributed by Maxwell and Co., this volume is an essential source book for any library which aims at thoroughness of research material in the contemporary labor movement. Included is the relevant statistical data on the trade union movements in 88 affiliated, and 19 associated, countries, with several exceptions that are explained in a brief preface by J. H. Oldenbrock, General Secretary of the ICTFU. Brief histories of the unions and some pertinent documents are included. There is a complete name index.

Berkeley Group

A Dissent Discussion Group has been started by students at the University of California in Berkeley. Students who are interested are urged to contact Sue Keisker, 1919-1/2 Addison, Berkeley, for further information (Thornwall 1-1406).

STATEMENT REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933, AND JULY 2, 1946 (Title 39, United States Code, Section 233) SHOWING THE OWNER-SHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION OF DISSENT, published quarterly at New York 1, N.Y. for October 1, 1957.

1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are Publisher, Walter Goldwater, 509 Fifth Ave., New York 17, N.Y.; Editor, None; Managing editor, None; Business manager, Stanley Plastrik, 509 Fifth Avenue, New York 17, N.Y.

2. The owner is: (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, its name and address, as well as that of each individual member, must be given.)

Walter Goldwater, 509 Fifth Ave., New York 17, N.Y.

3. The known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

4. Paragraphs 2 and 3 include, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting; also the statements in the two paragraphs show the affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner.

5. The average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed, through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the 12 months preceding the date shown above was: (This information is required from daily, weekly, semiweekly, and triweekly newspapers only.)

(Signed): Stanley Plastrik, business manager.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 1st day of October, 1957.

Benjamin Elshitz,

Notary Public, State of New York Residing in N.Y. County. Co. Clk's New York Reg. No. 31-1109100, Commission Expires March 30, 1959.

LETTERS...continued from page 2

Coser: "Such disregard for the lives, the cultures, the traditions, the moral conditions of the majority of mankind who live today in underdeveloped countries is the mark of the totalitarian spirit." This judgment ignores several elementary facts of life in underdeveloped countries. Increasingly, people in these countries are changing perspectives: Where is life cheaper today—in India or in the industrialized West? Cultures are being reshaped more after western models. And, it may be hazarded, the moral condition of these peoples is vast impatience with the traditional slow pace of life. It is out of regard for their own lives—finally—that these peoples are rising. Shall we bid them wait several more centuries?

I know nothing about Baran's "intellectual and moral courage." But an adequate review of his book requires: (1) an objective presentation of his general argument; (2) an impersonal evaluation of that argument; and (3) an awareness of the place of the work in the literature of the field. Instead, Mr. Coser tells us how he himself detests communism and how prejudiced Baran is, in the process revealing how little Coser knows about the political economy of growth.

MEYER WEINBERG

LEWIS COSER replies:

I criticized Mr. Baran for ignoring the specialized literature on underdeveloped countries. Now Mr. Weinberg gives an impressive list of scholars whom Baran allegedly used; but as it happens Baran quotes most of them *not* in connection with his discussion of underdeveloped countries, which starts on p. 134, but earlier in the book (this is easy to check with the index). Baran could hardly have quoted many of these scholars in connection with the specialized problems of underdeveloped areas since they have not contributed in this field. Simon Kuznets, for example, is a foremost expert on the United States economy; does Mr. Weinberg consider the U.S. an underdeveloped country? N. Kaldor is quoted in one footnote which refers to an article published in 1935 entitled "Market Imperfection and Excess Capa-

city"—hardly a problem for underdeveloped countries. Hans Neisser is quoted in one (1) footnote which refers to an article entitled "Stability in Late Capitalism"... There's no point in going through the whole list, these examples will have to suffice. I continue to maintain that Baran ignores the bulk of the specialized literature on underdeveloped areas that has grown up in recent years.

Mr. Weinberg believes that Baran's views are "more or less" reflected in the writings of the Bank of India, Gunnar Myrdal, the UN Commission on Latin America, etc. The "more or less" is delightful. One might as well assert that Ricardo's views are "more or less" reflected in the writings of Marx. The point is not that these authorities are also concerned with problems of capital hoarding, excessive consumption of the upper class, etc. Of course they are. The point is simply that they do not, to my knowledge, assert that the specified underdeveloped countries "could attain high, indeed very high, rates of growth" if only these problems could be solved.

Baran does indeed discuss population factors but only in order to dismiss a concern with them as typical of neo-Malthusian ignoramuses. To him "economic development" will in the long run take care of any difficulties that rising birth rates might create. As to the short run, there is silence. On the pages indicated by Mr. Weinberg, Baran does not discuss the problem of differential natural resources but rather the impact of foreign enterprise on the production patterns of underdeveloped areas—a different matter altogether. As to entrepreneurial talent, concern with this factor is dismissed by Baran as one of a "random assortment of profound-sounding but highly superficial reflections." Whom is Mr. Weinberg trying to kid?

Finally, Mr. Weinberg's concluding rhetorical flourish: "Where is life cheaper today—in India or in the industrialized West?" The answer would seem quite obvious: "*It is cheaper in India than in the West but not as cheap as in the totalitarian East, in Mao's China for example.*" The task for socialists therefore is to combat with all their energy an intellectual tendency which

praises the "Eastern Way" and advances it as a model for underdeveloped countries. We hope therefore that Indian socialists will not adopt either the "Eastern" or the "Western Way," but rather a specifically Indian way. That they are attempting to do so is shown by Asoka Mehta's articles in the 1955 Spring and Summer issues of *DISSENT*. As to some of the more general issues raised in this debate, the reader is referred to George Eckstein's notes in this issue. (Page 89).

Accentuate Positive

Editors:

I should like to express my pleasure that such socialists as Norman Thomas and Herman Singer are joining *DISSENT*. I hope this "trend" means that some more concrete political articles will appear... Sometimes the publication seems a bit overloaded with excessively abstract theoretical treatises. Of course, highly specialized analyses are a very necessary part of this magazine; but it does seem to this reader that the time may have come to "accentuate the positive" more, and to offer a rather larger percentage of articles which include actual suggestions for solving problems.

Ypsilanti, Mich.

ANN HUBBELL

Posies

Editors:

...am very impressed by breadth and scope of material... I intend to use [Kolko article and reply, winter and summer issues] for a discussion group.

N.S., Chicago

...Harrington and Thomas added to list of editors... prompted my subscription.

R.W., Buffalo

I enjoyed Mr. Pachter's article in the Fall *DISSENT*. It very effectively cut through so much of the fruitless verbiage of Sovietology. I suppose few will call attention to your article now that Zhukov has gone—it might cause a crisis in the industry of journalistic Soviet prophets.

F.P.

...I have been pleasantly surprised with your spring issue. Both the narrow doctrinaire simplifications of the Right and the Left, and the lack of courage of the Middle of the political spectrum have left me discouraged. Your magazine was

a refreshing revelation.

W.K., Evanston, Ill.

... [*DISSENT*] is an articulate voice of non-sectarian, honest and yet responsible radicalism.

D.K., Columbus

... *DISSENT* has enriched us deeply on many scores, keeping us in touch with the thought and outlook of old friends and introducing us to new ones...

F. & Y. D., Detroit

[ED. NOTE: We get scores and scores of letters like those excerpted above. And, like those above, most come with one or more subs, and often with a little something *extra*. That helps too!...]

Nuclear Testing

Editors:

The world-wide damage caused by nuclear bomb testing is now a matter of general knowledge, and the time for action to end the continuation of tests is at hand. The New York Committee to Halt Nuclear Testing, a newly formed non-partisan citizens' group, consequently wishes to submit the following petition to the President, and asks the aid of readers in circulating it. Interested persons should communicate with the Committee at P.O. Box 144, G.P.O., N.Y.C.

"A PETITION TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES"

"As a result of nuclear tests held thus far, radioactive poisons, the most potent and insidious known, have been spread throughout earth, air and sea. It is established that these substances permeate all living things, and can cause genetic damage, besides cancer of the blood and bone. Although for years America and Russia have had enough atomic weapons to destroy each other along with the rest of the world, all attempts to end bomb tests by international agreement have failed. Now new H-bomb tests are planned and the global health menace is critical. The fact that totalitarian Russia includes nuclear testing among the crimes against humanity perpetrated within its border can not excuse further tests by the United States.

"We, as citizens of the United States, hereby petition our government to stop all testing of nuclear weapons *now*."

MRS. HELEN KLAUSER WURF

Miscellany

But What About the Underdeveloped Countries?

George Eckstein

IN HIS REVIEW of Milovan Djilas' *New Class*, [DISSENT, Fall 1957] Norman Thomas necessarily had to stress the general and very powerful job of debunking which this book has performed. But there is one problem touched upon by Djilas which merits further discussion for the simple reason that it is fast becoming a central problem for the new nations of Asia and Africa: the problem of industrialization in undeveloped countries. It has not yet received enough attention, perhaps because it does not lie in the natural path of Western radical thought.

These brief notes can no more than hint at some aspects of the problem, with Djilas, whose own experience was shaped in an underdeveloped country, serving as a useful witness.

Fallacy No. 1: "Communism is the socialism of the underdeveloped countries." If Socialism today can be loosely defined as a movement in an advanced industrial society toward a more just distribution of riches combined with democratic control of basic industries, Communism today, stripped of its "Marxist" verbiage, is mainly the form in which the agrarian countries of Eastern Europe and parts of Asia have begun to industrialize. The "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" is the misnomer for an economic and political system in which the State (identical with the Party) owns all the means of production and tightly controls investment, production and distribution of goods. Except for the verbiage, this "Communism" (which appears "classless" only when seen from the commanding heights of the dictatorial leadership) has nothing in common with the humanitarian communism of Marx.

Fallacy No. 2: The dictatorial methods and the low living standard are but temporary evils made inevitable by the need for rapid industrialization. They correspond to the child labor and other forms of exploitation which accompanied the

"original accumulation" of British and other Western capitalism. There is a grain of plausibility in this argument which makes it the favorite line of reasoning used by apologists of the Russian system when driven into a corner. But it does not stand up on closer scrutiny. True, within a national economy, at any given rate of productivity there is only so much social product, and if too much goes into consumption, not enough of it is left for investment in new facilities. True also, in any agrarian country beginning to industrialize, unskilled labor and part of the capital has to be drawn from the agrarian sector. But here the differences begin: the industrialization of the early 1800's started in *light* industry (textiles, etc.) and after a rough initial period led to the availability of cheap consumer goods. Russia's industrialization was from the start directed toward armaments and heavy industry, and thus never in a position to release an increasing part of the economic cake for consumption. On the contrary, as Djilas aptly points out, the flow of investment into armaments and heavy industry is even now *increasing* (from 53.3 per cent of total investment in 1954 to 60 per cent in 1955). The reason for this is not economic, but political: the Communist rulers, the *New Class*, have deliberately built their economy as an autarchic system, with a huge military apparatus, in order to preserve their own power. Relaxations in the field of consumer goods are no more than temporary concessions in order to maintain this power.

YET THERE IS TODAY NO *economic* necessity for such autarchic procedure. The "original accumulation" of the 18th and 19th century had to start from scratch. Today, however, the undeveloped and underdeveloped countries not only can profit from past experience in economic development, but they have access to the technical and economic know-how of the industrialized countries; and the latter dispose of a sufficient reservoir of capital which could ease the former's path toward industrialization. A not inconsiderable amount of this capital has been made available, partly thru private investment, partly thru various govern-

mental channels (the U.S. of course being the prime source). This flow of capital has been turned on and off and distributed rather capriciously; it has been clearly insufficient for such pivotal nations as India and Indonesia. This has been largely due to *political* considerations of various kinds; but to some extent it also stemmed from the tightness of the capital market in recent years. And insofar as a saturation point for these investments seems to have been reached, the increased availability of funds, and with it the increased competition among the major industrial nations, may be expected to counteract some of the political reluctance. This leads to

Fallacy No. 3: Economic aid is only available at the cost of national independence. This idea is a leftover from the period of open imperialism when the economic exchange between industrialized countries and raw-material (undeveloped) countries led to the latter's exploitation. But the successful movements for national independence in Asia and Africa have by and large put a stop to this condition. To be sure, this era is by no means completely over. But to realize how far we have come, one has only to observe how quickly even our present State Department has disavowed the quixotic directive of the parting ICA administrator, attempting to reserve our foreign economic aid to "private enterprise." Private investment is still too much concentrated in mining and oil, and any foreign aid or loan will imply some form of supervision of its use. But various economic aims will obtain, even in today's tight money market, the needed cooperation from among the competing industrialized countries without jeopardizing national independence, except insofar as it will involve a freer exchange of goods, people and ideas. This, of course, would be suicide for Russia's "New Class."

Fallacy No 4: Collectivization is a higher and more productive form of agricultural production. If it really were, it would not have to be maintained by force over an unwilling farm population (it has been the first institution to collapse wherever the pressure was relaxed: in the German-occupied parts of Russia

during the war, in Poland and Hungary since "October"). Again the main reasons for its imposition were not economic, but political: to establish full control over a sector of the economy and of the population which had maintained partial independence; and to obtain slave labor. This aim was achieved at the cost of hundreds of thousands if not millions of lives of able-bodied people and at the cost of a reduction in per capita farm production which even today has in many sectors not reached the pre-1914 Russian standard—an economic irrationality if ever there was one.

The economic factors which make for increase in agricultural productivity are of a different nature: scientific research and dissemination of its results, improved machinery, organization of markets. A social reorganization is only needed insofar as the old setup cannot accommodate itself to these changes (feudalism, dwarf-sized plots); in the case of small and medium-sized farms, cooperatives are usually the answer, together with publicly run experimental stations and labs. U.S. agriculture has, especially since the 1930's, continuously increased its total production, with an ever-decreasing farm population. The adaptation even of its purely technical methods to countries with different traditions and a different social framework is of course not possible without profound social changes. But while it has to be adapted to these various conditions, especially in the densely populated areas in Asia, it can certainly show ways to the urgently needed increase in agricultural productivity.

Fallacy No. 5: A totally planned economy controlled from on top is necessarily a superior and more productive form of industrial organization. (This is the reverse of our own myth of "private enterprise"). Since heavy industry and armaments tied down such a large part of the available social product, the Russians had to impose a detailed production program for all sectors of the economy, with a central agency determining everything down to minute details. Over-centralized planning, together with the lack of control from below; premiums against initiative; emphasis on quantitative norms without regard to quality—all these factors combined to create im-

measurable waste of manpower, materials and energy. Expressed differently: the *political* system lowers the productivity so that the total economic cake is smaller than the *technical* facilities would permit. As Djilas, and more recently Stefan Dedijer in his sensational article in the September *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* point out, this wastefulness goes on even in those sectors like atomic energy, in which the dictatorial regime has achieved seemingly impressive results thanks to a huge concentration of effort and investment. Naturally, the waste defies measurement; nor can it be even approximately determined to what extent corruption, black or gray markets and open or tolerated private trading relieve the rigidity of the system.

The un- or underdeveloped nations of Asia and Africa and, let us add, Latin America, cannot afford the wastefulness of the Communist system, or for that matter, the quite different capitalist variety which is born of abundance. Their situation is complicated by problems neither the Russian nor the early European industrial revolution ever had to face. The same time lag that permits them to draw on the experience of the industrially developed countries, showers them, too, with the benefits of modern medical science and hygiene. Consequently, they are faced with the task of simultaneously developing their industry and agriculture at a pace that outruns their population growth. So far they have been lagging behind in both; hence the increasing stress upon birth control.

IN CONTRAST to earlier industrial revolutions, they must (because of the urgency) and they can (thanks to the availability of previous experience) set up overall plans of priorities, negotiate for the needed assistance in capital and technical know-how, and direct the general flow of investments, private and public. Clearly a task that can only be done centrally by the government which, in the absence of substantial domestic private capital, will have to run or control the larger and most vital projects.

All these considerations ignore of course the much more fundamental question of human values: industrial development may very well destroy, together

with a lot of poverty and disease, some of the spiritual and moral achievements in regard to which our industrial civilization is clearly the "underdeveloped" one. More people, at a higher material standard of living, may live less happily, and spiritually poorer than before.

But that is another story.

Why Anxiety?

William Spinrad

SUPPOSE one were to pose the question: why is anxiety so endemic to our current national life? The most likely response would be a supercilious shrug: naturally, anxiety must be the common state of those who have lived through upheaval, destruction, dislocation. Some would add self-evident political explanations—the threat of Communist totalitarianism, the perilous state of domestic civil liberties, or both. Others would stress the uneasy search for spiritual roots or the prevalence of anti-intellectualism.

As it happens, whatever relevant empirical data we have, that of the opinion polls reveals something quite different. Samuel Stouffer's inquiry into attitudes towards *Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties*, based upon interviews with a representative national cross-section in the spring of 1954, included the question: "What kinds of things do you worry about most?" Only *ten per cent* said anything that could be classified under the headings of world problems, civil liberties, communism, etc.—the "big issues." By contrast, almost everybody spoke of personal problems, and almost half emphasized *economic* worries.

When further prodded, a much larger proportion (about a third) expressed some disturbance over world affairs; direct, pointed questions would probably have brought out more. But the initial, spontaneous replies stand out.

One can anticipate an automatic objection to the use of these findings. The argument will be that the responses reflect the accepted formula of what one should worry about, rather than the real, often hidden, common anxieties. By its very nature, this objection cannot be answered with any finality, but it is note-

worthy that no observed behaviour contradicts these verbal statements. Measured by such phenomena as the public apathy towards the "McCarthy question," what people do seems to jibe with what they say. Until psychoanalysts' files offer some contrary data, it would seem that, despite the recent years of prosperity, the most common cause of anxiety remains the fear of not having enough money.

How can such things be in our affluent America, where almost every thinker, regardless of political stance, speaks of a "Society of Abundance"? Gabriel Kolko's examination of the actual income situation [DISSENT, Winter 1957] supplies part of the answer. Many Americans are simply not so well-off as advertised; they are still struggling to maintain a subsistence level or, at best, attain minimum comfort. Yet money worries are hardly confined to them. The dread of not having the "right" income may torture the successful even more than the deprived.

A possible explanation is that it is all a cultural lag—a lingering of earlier attitudes into a time when they are no longer appropriate. Unquestionably, the depression trauma would remain with us for a long time in the best of circumstances. But the current obsession with money is too widespread and profound to be blamed merely on memory traces.

THIS IS AN AGE of plenty, or rather, *it seems to be*. All the material things that can make life enjoyable and which the titillation of mass advertising never lets you forget, appear within easy reach. All it takes is "just a little more money." But since we do not have a genuine economy of abundance, the necessary money is often not there. Most people, therefore, get their desired material goods only at the cost of mortgaging their futures with consumer debts, which means not only material problems but psychic insecurity.

Secondly, economic insecurity itself remains a frightening prospect, no matter how sanguine the professional economists may be. Between the generalized statements of the economists and the daily life problems of obscure individuals there is, perhaps must be, a wide gulf. And even when people have certain kinds of "rock bottom" security, such as pension plans, guaranteed wages, and tenure in

bureaucratic organizations, they naturally want more. Their anxiety is not merely a sign of a generalized social malaise, but of very real immediate problems.

Thirdly: the possession of material goods remain the dominant motif of our ethos. Despite the publicized religious revival and the anti-materialistic postures of both the slick and the sensitive, having money is still the basic standard by which the worth of persons is judged. In certain circles it may now be bad taste to own a conspicuous Cadillac when everyone else owns a Buick. But this type of conformism can lead to more anxiety than the former overt competitiveness.

This has, of course, been the popular American formula since way back. Today, however, it has begun to dominate those who should be the proponents of other values—the intellectuals. In the 1920s they provided a critical perspective upon the money mania. Now, too many of the men of ideas and sensibility have been snugly fitted into Talent, Inc. The inevitable outcome is, to use Philip Rahv's language, "the embourgeoisement of the American intelligentsia," generating an appropriate "spiritual torpor."

For both intellectuals and others, the transcendent evaluation of money involves a lapse into an obvious, "residual" style of living as a substitute for abandoned goals. The traditional values of social idealism either seem out of reach or a result of large-scale impersonal operations. Income, however, remains the one thing that people think they can still do something about. (In the 1930s, interestingly enough, this was the area that appeared least open to personal control.) Yet, since our economy remains inequitable and perilous, this represents an illusion. Only a few are likely to succeed. The dogged efforts of the rest to climb a greased pole must generally result in perpetual anxiety.

All this does not imply that most Americans are motivated solely by the desire for money. Other interests are important. But in deciding why anxiety seems so prevalent these days, the most compelling analysis, reluctantly accepted because of its unheroic implications, stresses the apparent paradox of personal economic worries during the greatest production boom in history.

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